

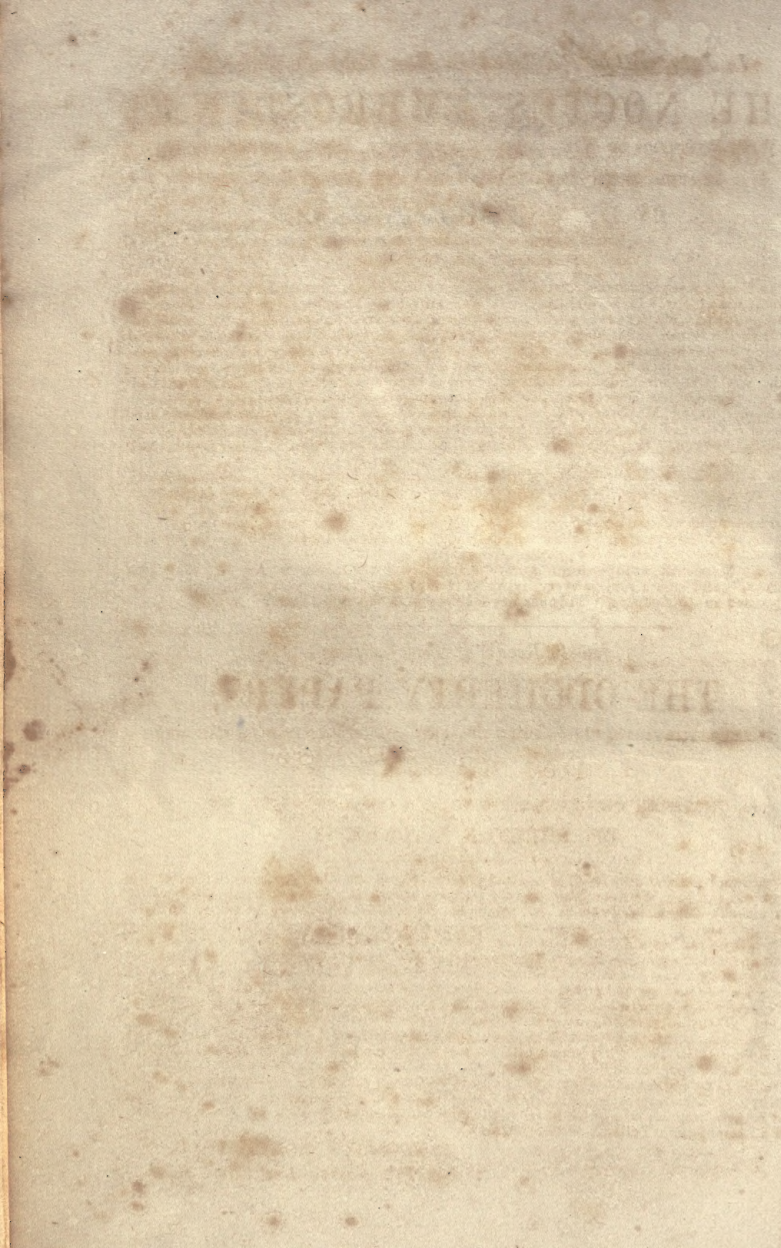








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## PREFATORY.

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THE following pages present the autobiography of one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived ; a man who, in the course of his mere commercial life, has had more and stranger adventures than are given to most professed travellers, and who relates them with a vividness and reality that deserve to give him rank among writers.

His book professes to give the history of fifty years, but the reader will find that it embraces seventy, and makes him acquainted with half the people in the world. In Europe and America, let him wander where he would, he never, in his late years, failed to find an old acquaintance. Men recognized him through the dust-clouds of Odessa, as in the bar-rooms of Natchez under the Hill. Napoleon, at the age of 24, examined him. Victoria has given him private audiences. He watched the rise and fall of Louis Philippe, after witnessing the accomplishment of the catastrophe of the Restoration. He has doffed his hat to Ferdinand of Austria, in Trieste, and shaken hands with the savage kings west of the Mississippi.

He was a German citizen of the United States, born in Italy, and lived all over. He built flat-boats at Pittsburgh, for the navigation of the Ohio, and shouted among the crowd who cheered Robert Fulton's steamboat, as she first started from the wharf at New York. He has been wrecked off the coast of Florida, and imprisoned in the Queen's Bench, at London. He was suspected of having the plague at Malta, and *had* the yellow fever in New Orleans. He peeped into the crater of Etna, and was shaken by the earthquake at Louisville. Napoleon's whole career and Aaron Burr's conspiracy are made a couple of items in his extraordinary existence.

This Yankee cotton speculator arranged the conversion of a loan for his holiness the Pope. This confidential adviser of the Austrian premier Von Kuebeck was a soldier of General Jackson, at the battle of New Orleans. This commissary of Louis Philippe and Duke Charles of Brunswick, was the intimate friend of the republican Lafayette. This lover of Livornese opera girls was mingled in the plans of Nicholas Biddle. This handler and possessor of untold thousands, of millions of money, lived on bread and cheese in Venice ; and to get even that much, translated some English title-deeds for the monks of San Lorenzo.

The very names in this volume are wonderful. Kings, Emperors, Presidents and Popes jostle each other through its pages. Poets and painters are criticised and gossipped about—Chantrey and Nollekens, Delaroche and Delacroix, Nerly and Landseer. Now you have a story of Göthe, and again an anecdote of Chateaubriand. Byron and Lamartine, Kotzebue and Cooper come quite familiarly to the tip of his pen, and when tired of telling what he knows about these, he writes verses himself—verses of great mediocrity.

One of the richest of modern merchants, and most daring of speculators, he yet never neglected his love for art nor his talent with the crayon. When his commercial greatness had culminated and waned, he became everything by turns—commissary for arms and provisions; agent for a machine to engrave circular lines; editor of the little free port newspaper of Hamburgh; political squib writer in the United States; clerk in a third-class house of business; translator of manuscript for Italian friars.

Vain, amusing, garrulous, scandalous old fellow; with the dryest common sense, that is not to be tricked; with the keenest eye for a defect, either in person or character, and a bitter or comic humor to help him in describing it, Mr. Vincent Nolte presents to our eyes one of the most curious life-panoramas that it is possible to see.

You must take his personalities, especially about people here, *cum grano salis*. He seldom looks at the bright side of a character, and dearly loves—he confesses it—a bit of scandal. But he paints well, describes well, seizes characteristics which make clear to the reader the nature of the man whom they illustrate.

The amount of really useful information, historical, commercial, artistic, and personal, in this work, is immense; and it is so interspersed with anecdote and adventure, with variety and scandal “of a pleasant tartness,” that all heaviness is destroyed, and the book is as delightful as a novel.

We expect, of course, from the reading world, even more than a usual warmth of welcome for this entertaining work.

THE TRANSLATOR.



## INTRODUCTION.

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KIND READER! whatever the chance that has given me the right to address you, and has placed this book in your hands, I must, of necessity, look for you in one of the three following categories:

Either you belong to that very large number of individuals who, up to the present time, have neither known, heard, nor read any thing about me:

Or, to the smaller number who have, only here and there, cast a glance at the proofs of my literary activity; but are, still, altogether unacquainted with me and the events of my life:

Or, finally; to those who, under the inevitable condition of incomplete or untrue representations, have become more or less acquainted with me, have heard all sorts of things about me, or have learned, at least, my name.

From each and every member of these three classes I may expect the question: What are you going to offer us, when, in the title of your book, you speak of the *Reminiscences of a Former Merchant*, extracted from the History of a Life which has embraced the first half of the present century? Do you merely intend to narrate the mercantile observation and experience of a man wholly given up to

commercial pursuits; or have we to deal with one whom his business-occupations have not prevented from looking carefully at things around him and noting the great events of his time, nor from obtaining personal information and availing himself of opportunities to observe distinguished characters, both in and out of his own calling, one who has been able to form and retain unprejudiced views, and has, during his own career, experienced the ups and downs of fortune, the vicissitudes of human existence and the consequences of human error? Should your inquiries, dear reader, embody the last words I have used, you have, indeed, hit the nail on the head,—since they convey precisely the tenor of much the greater portion of the historical and biographical sketches you will find in this work. Truth, and not poetry, composes the contents of the book you now hold in your hand.

Neither the private individual nor the business-man who gives extracts from his biography over to publicity, can often escape the suspicion of inordinate vanity and a blind overestimate of his own merit or of the part he has played in society. As feelings of that kind have not exerted any influence, in the present case, it is my duty to say a word regarding the motive in which these pages have had their real origin.

If, out of the panoramic whirl of my varying fortunes and experiences, no other recollections remained to me than such as have reference to the life of a merchant, solely, you might well conclude, dear reader, after what I have said above, that I should never have so far yielded to the numerous and repeated solicitations of many friends and acquaintances on both sides of the Ocean, who have long been

urging me to this step, as to let the resolve ripen within me to depict in a continuous narrative the most remarkable epochs of that important period of the world's history through which I have lived; and, so far as I have, in a greater or less degree, participated in them or witnessed them, to set forth the stirring events of the last half century in a recital which, apart from all personal connection with the author, might possess some attraction for the public at large. However, very early in life and, indeed, at an age when one is usually regarded as unripe for the proper consideration of important interests, chance, going hand-in-hand with the remarkable development of the world's history that has taken place since I entered upon my allotted sphere of activity, has brought remarkable events, remarkable men, and extraordinary business-combinations directly under my eyes, has kept my mental faculties in constant exercise and has made me acquainted, nay, has frequently placed me in close contact with a succession of distinguished personages. Under these circumstances, I have indulged the belief that what I have to communicate to my readers in these pages, might awaken not merely a certain curiosity, but probably something more than a simply transient interest, and not only excite their attention, but possibly keep it alive to the end, so that, in a general point of view, they will reap some gratification, or, at all events, some profit from the faithful reflection of certain truths which, I flatter myself, I have learned during the lapse of a not unimportant portion of the history of our time. At any rate, they may discover in this work much that is useful, much that is new, and, taking it altogether, find it not entirely worthless entertainment for a leisure-hour. The



history of my experience in practical life,—at least such has been my own impression,—should lead all thoughtful minds, as well as every reflecting reader occupied with the advancement of his own mental culture and moral perfection, to the conviction that, at the opening of each new epoch in our lives, as we progress from stadium to stadium along the toilsome way, we commence and must pass through a fresh novitiate which brings with it tests and trials more or less severe. Hence, the necessity of continual self-examination and an untiring watch over our present as well as prospective relations, in so far at least as the latter can be calculated; and in this, perhaps, lies the instruction that these volumes may contain. For I confess, without hesitation, that I have not always, in the course of my career, been able to keep this rule before my eyes.

Permit me to make one or two further remarks. That mercantile experiences, observations and views occupy, in one place or another, a not unimportant space in these pages, is the natural consequence of the relations and circumstances in which I have lived; but, however dry reminiscences and reflections of this kind may be to the general reader, I hope, at least, that I have clothed them in language so comprehensive that even the reader least familiar with commercial affairs, will not deny them a certain degree of interest, especially since they refer back to periods of which we could at the present day form but an imperfect idea, without some proper land-mark, and which cannot be altogether useless to the young merchant.

Whoever, in memoirs of this kind, strays from the strictest path of truth, diminishes their value and invades the regions of romance. The measure of respect which I feel

for the truth will be found by you, dear reader, in the frankness with which I have spoken in relation to myself and the vicissitudes of my own life. I have suppressed nothing, misrepresented nothing, but have laid myself open to the eyes of all; thoroughly disclosing what I am, and where and how the influence of circumstances which so very often deceive the highest powers of foresight possessed by men, has not unfrequently controlled my position and actions. I bring you without hesitation what is not in the power of every one to bring,—the offering of thorough rectitude of intention, convinced that you will not withhold from me the consideration and allowance to which I believe I may lay rightful claim, without putting your good will to too severe a proof.

To my contemporaries whose names appear in these pages, I am at all times, as in duty bound, ready to render full account. In reviewing the past, no one is brought before the public who would have been entitled to remain in the background without occasioning an injurious void in the connection of my memoirs and reminiscences, and without leaving very perceptible gaps in my descriptive sketches. Placing them upon the same platform with myself, before the reader's judgment, I share whatever fate befalls them, since I voluntarily resign the right of making any reply in self-defence, notwithstanding the fact that the changes of human life have placed it in my power and taken it away from them. No one could ask for more. The old motto : *de mortuis nil nisi bene*, under the sanction of which so much falsehood has been served up to a credulous posterity, has been regarded by me only in those cases where unblemished reputations have made praise a duty,

or, I might say, almost unavoidable; but, where historical Truth, in order to assert her rights without regard to any minor or unworthy considerations, demands the voice of censure, I have not, indeed, entirely abandoned the accents of palliating moderation, but have still given full scope to the safer motto: *de mortuis nil nisi vere!* and allowed a sportive but yet kindly humor of my own to have its way.

THE AUTHOR.



## CHAPTER I.

### REMINISCENCES OF THE AUTHOR'S BOYHOOD AND YOUTH.

Leghorn, his birth-place, in 1779—Journey to Hamburgh, in 1788—Visit to Leghorn, 1791–1792—Return to Hamburgh, in 1792—Professor C. F. Hipp of Tübingen, his first and only instructor—Commencement of his mercantile career, in the House of Messrs. Otto Franck and Co. at Leghorn, in 1795—Entry of the French into Leghorn, under General Bonaparte, 1796—General Murat—Major Hullin—The popular representatives Garat and Salicetti—Sojourn at Florence—The villa Pandolfini, in 1797—Return to Hamburgh—French theatre in Hamburgh—The commercial crisis at Hamburgh, in the year 1799—Sojourn at Hamburgh—Altered family circumstances—Determination to leave the place—Departure from Hamburgh in 1804.

If it be true, as Louis the Fourteenth was the first to say, and as Louis the Eighteenth repeated, that “punctuality is the politeness of kings” —“*l’exactitude est la politesse des rois*”—it is still more true, that, to a merchant, punctuality is the first source of his credit, and that in it lies one of the vital conditions of his success. My good father, who destined me to mercantile pursuits, and who, even in my earliest years, sought to impress upon my mind the precepts of social and mercantile rectitude, did not fail to offer, in his own person, the most striking example of his respect for that excellent quality. He married on February 22d, 1779, at the age of forty, and was, thenceforward, assisted in his cultivation of the virtue he so much admired, by my mother who, by-the-by, was punctual in all she undertook, for she brought me into the world on November 21st, or, precisely at the termination of the nine regular months prescribed by the laws of nature.

Tuscany is the land of my birth, and the city in which it

occurred is Leghorn, where my father John Henry Nolte a native of Hamburgh, had acted as apprentice and shop-boy, at first, in the house of his uncle Otto Franck, but during the last fifteen years preceding his marriage, had officiated as a partner in the concern. This uncle had been brought up in England, and was married to an English lady. He had taken my father, when only nine years of age, from Hamburgh, and sent him to college at Exeter, in England, where the boy was raised and educated at his expense, until he called him away, in his sixteenth year, to Leghorn.

My father was unable to make good, from the barbarous style of mercantile correspondence in use at that period, what he had lost of his mother tongue during his seven years' sojourn in England; but in its stead, he had learned the English language in uncommon perfection, and continued to speak it for the remainder of his life with especial preference. But still, his uninterrupted residence, of more than thirty years in Italy, always made him look upon that country as his real home; and thus the two languages, English and Italian, became a sort of second nature to him, while the German, as was to have been expected, remained a merely secondary convenience. He had probably never received correct tuition in it, so incorrectly and ungrammatically was he accustomed to write it.

At the college, in Exeter, there sprang up between him and a school-mate named Francis Baring, the son of a cloth manufacturer, an intimate friendship, which continued to subsist until 1811, when Baring, who had in after years become remarkable as the originator and founder of the great London firm of the same name, died. There is yet extant, in the hands of his children, a collection of Biblical sayings and book extracts, written by my father at Exeter, in the year 1754, and also containing the autograph of his friend Baring. When my father visited England in 1772 this old friendship was renewed, during a business and pleasure trip, undertaken by Baring and himself, through England and Scotland, and led to a closer business connection between the then London firm of John and Francis Baring and my father's house in Leghorn, Otto Franck and Company. The

necessities of the Messrs. Baring, who had to import dye-stuffs and like materials from Italy for the cloth manufactory, established and afterwards enlarged by them, in Exeter, as well as for other similar establishments, had laid the foundation of this business connection. I shall, in the course of my present work, have occasion, in relating my own very considerable intercourse with the successors of the respected London firm, to return to the family.

My readers, probably, feel as little anxiety as I do myself, to learn what was the real origin of my family, which I, God only knows why, have always taken to be Italian. I recollect having heard my father say that his grandfather had owned large mills in the vicinity of Carlshamm, in Sweden. How, in the name of sense, this circumstance could ever have put it into my head that my family was of Italian descent, I cannot imagine. But when, after a residence of several years, at a later period of my life, in Trieste, I was about to leave that city, chance threw a kind of key to the mystery in my way—although, as I have already remarked, I never gave myself much trouble about the matter. There then lived, and if I am not greatly mistaken, still live at Trieste, three merchants by the name of Vogel, one of whom, owing to his extensive dealings in coffee, was nicknamed the *Coffee Vogel*; the other, on account of his business as agent for several commercial houses, was called the *Wandering Vogel*; and the third, who had obtained from the Austrian government the exclusive privilege of selling what amount of poisonous drugs were required for consumption and exportation, was universally known as the *Poison Vogel*.\* It was the latter who, a few days before my departure from Trieste, took it into his head to give me a gleam of light concerning my ancestors; and told me, with great gravity, that he had accidentally been reading the chronicles of an old Austrian general of the Thirty Years' War, and had learned from them that two commanders of Lombard regiments belonging to his *corps d'armée*, had taken French leave, and gone over to the camp of Gustavus Adolphus. One of these two, he added, was

\* These three German words mean, respectively, the *coffee-bird*, *bird of passage*, and *poison-bird*. Hence, the spirit of the joke is greatly impaired by translation.



called Nolte : this, he seemed to consider, explained the riddle of my Swedish and yet Italian origin, beyond a doubt ; for, that the Swedish miller Nolte, in Carlshamm, was descended from the Lombard deserter of the Austrian army, appeared to him a natural consequence and a matter of course.

I had just, a short time previously, entered my ninth year, when my father formed the resolution of leaving Leghorn and removing, with his whole family, which then consisted of my mother and myself, one brother and two sisters, to Hamburgh, for the purpose of securing to his children all the advantages which would have been inaccessible to them had they remained longer in Italy. Upon our arrival in Hamburgh, we first went to the Senator Matsen, my grandfather on the mother's side, who was, just at that time, amtmann in Ritzebüttel. Soon after our return from that place, I was placed under the charge of a half-English, half-French tutor by the name of Geris, a native of Jersey, who was then carrying on an educational institute for boys in the neighboring village of Oppendorf, where my father had purchased a country-seat and garden. He was an indolent, ignorant man, who surrendered the whole task of instructing his pupils to all kinds of under-tutors, and gave over the conduct of his household to a *menagère* who was inclined to accept his not altogether Platonic blandishments, and to pack off the *dunces* who amused themselves, from time to time, by disturbing the bacchanalian exercises which usually preceded those endearments. Some recollections of this brief period, during which I learned nothing but to steal fruit from the orchard, long remained fresh in my memory. My most intimate crony, in those days, Siegmund Rücker, who stood for so many years at the head of the first sugar-broker business of the London Exchange, died suddenly last summer, in his 74th year, in consequence of the sudden suspension of payments by his firm. My friendship with him, renewed in subsequent years at Leghorn, lasted until his death.

After I had fooled away more than eighteen months in this parody of an educational establishment, my father was obliged to visit Leghorn on business, and took me with him, without any other object in view, so far as I was concerned, than to have me

with him. We arrived in that city shortly before the commencement of the carnival. A daily visit to the Opera House was freely accorded me as I was only 11 years of age, and known, moreover, as the son of one of the heaviest shareholders in the "Teatro degl' avvalorati"; hence, the progress of my education became limited to the dancing hours of the, then, *primo ballerino* Gianfaldoni, and the fencing rehearsals of his brother who, as leader of the so-called Grotesque Quadrille, without which no ballet was considered possible at that time, also belonged to the corps. During the performance of the opera, well-known masks are received into all the boxes, in Italy, during the carnival season. So I, too, was seized with a fancy to try my skill in the sport; but, then, where was I to get my dress? who would give me the money, which was sure to be refused me by my father? However, I managed to overcome all these difficulties. When I was setting out from Hamburg they had given me, among other things, a gala-jacket of wonderfully beautiful red cloth, and a pair of white cassimere breeches, and as I had remarked that my uncle, who had succeeded my father not only in the management of the Otto Franck establishment, but also in the Hamburg Consulate as well as in the use of the identical red consular coat left behind him by his brother, used to cut a very ridiculous figure in that garment, I hit upon the idea, and quickly determined to have my red jacket transformed into a miniature consular uniform, and to appear in the theatre as the "Signor Consolino di Amburgo," and to mimic my uncle's laughable airs. The little consul created a perfect furor. This impudent piece of roguish invention pleased my father amazingly, but the one who never forgave me was, as I might have expected, my good aunt, who was not at any time much inclined to be amiable.

In the following spring my father took me back to Hamburg, and looked about him in search of a private tutor for myself and my younger brother Henry. A truly lucky chance for me—I have always regarded it as such, at least—brought to his notice a Suabian graduate who pleased him at first sight, and was immediately installed in our house as tutor. This person, a native of Tübingen, who afterwards distinguished himself as one of the

most valuable teachers in Hamburg, and who has fashioned and stored so many strong intellects and left the impression as well as the traces of his rare talents as a precious legacy to his scholars, was the future Gymnasium Professor Carl F. Hipp, whose name has never ceased to live in the grateful recollection of his former pupils, but has remained more especially stamped indelibly upon my memory. More than forty-eight years have rolled away since I was withdrawn from his charge, to return to Italy, where I was to enter my father's establishment as an apprentice and begin my mercantile career, yet I still look back with emotions of pleasure to the time when I enjoyed the instruction of that excellent man.

He had always known how to gratify my restless love of knowledge, in the fullest measure, give it a wholesome direction, and managed to stimulate my natural diligence in such a degree that I never failed to experience especial pleasure in accomplishing the manifold tasks he put upon me to be learned between afternoon and the next morning, and then again between Saturday and Monday, and I felt quite proud when he, one day, wrote in a report of my general behavior and proficiency, word to the effect that with my many perfect recitations, I had *regularly crushed him to the ground*. I arrived at Leghorn with this burning need of activity and a no less eager zeal for progress in everything. I there found my friend Rücker, who had also just been placed as an apprentice, or to use our term, a *volunteer*, in the counting-room of Messrs. Holst. Conducted the very next morning to the office of Franck, I was set at work, of course, upon the A B C's of the mercantile craft, viz. : the copy-books, which were laid before me in both the English and German languages, with the intimation that making correct transcripts of the letters they contained, in either tongue, would be my first employment. The gentlemen letter-writers were of the usual kind, and their wretched style and language wearied me to the utmost limits of endurance, and their news touching oil and soap, brimstone and Spanish liquorice had but little attraction for one like me, whom my honored preceptor had inspired with a refined taste for the firstlings of Schiller's Muse. Thus I toiled, most unwillingly, without any zest for the work before me, and, conse-



quently, executed it badly. As already intimated, the guidance of the house had remained in the hands of my uncle, a very weak man, whose facility in transacting business was the only merit he could count, to say that he had one. He possessed no knowledge whatever of the world or of men, and gave ready heed to the suggestions of inordinate vanity. The counting-room of the house of Otto Franck and Co. was in the basement of the still surviving house of Franchetti, adjoining the Mayoralty,—the Piazza della Communita—on the corner of the Piazza d'Arme. To come strutting out of the office entirely bareheaded, with no cravat, his morning gown fluttering about him, his linen open at the bosom and neck, and his feet decorated with a pair of red Turkish slippers, and parade up and down half the length of the square, attended by a train of goods-and-money-brokers, he gesticulating (an accomplishment sometimes, as every one knows, often more readily learned in Italy than the language,) so as to attract the notice of strangers to the *Capo dela casa*, Otto Franco, as he was generally styled, gave him rare pleasure, which nothing but bad weather could compel him to forego, and even then the sacrifice was a sore one. It was out of the question for me to expect any valuable instruction or correct mercantile ideas from such a man. It never entered his head to inspect the progress I was making or to cheer me forward and sustain me in an amiable and instructive manner, by providing certain books which the knowledge I gradually acquired of the business of the house from its correspondence, and the trade transactions I saw going around me, made me consider necessary. On the contrary! One day he took the notion to inspect one of the note books upon which I had been busied. Mistakes and omissions were instantly discovered, as my companions, directly afterwards, informed me,—I had been looking for some slight correction or information, but not a trace of either was vouchsafed. But, there was a large dinner party at the house that same day. It included strangers from all the commercial cities of Europe and some notabilities of Leghorn, among others the influential and popular advocate Baldasseroni. Of course I could not then have dreamed that fifty years later I should be so familiar with

that man's great work on the *Insurance System*, written long after the period of which I speak. I was sitting at the lower corner of the table. Suddenly, in a pause of conversation, the voice of my uncle, who was sitting at the upper end, rang out with the following words, to make the punishment he wished to administer the more impressive and severe: "Vincent! I take this opportunity of saying to you that it is long since I saw such careless blundering work as your order-book exhibits!" The effect produced by this abrupt attack upon an ambitious youth of fifteen may be readily conceived. There I sat under the gaze of the whole company as though I had been struck by lightning and utterly annihilated, but at length managed to collect my senses sufficiently to reply: "My own father, had he been here, would not have taken advantage of such an occasion as this to heap reproaches upon me,"—then to spring up from my seat, and making for the door, draw it to after me with great violence.

Such scenes as this, for the entertainment of his necessarily invited guests, were not at all uncommon with my uncle. I need not say to my readers that they inspired me with no respect for him, and were not at all calculated to increase my attachment to a mercantile life; which, from the first, had been forced upon me, instead of having been voluntarily selected. My mind had acquired an artistic turn, and my predilection for painting made me wish to become a painter. I wrote to that effect to my father, but much as he respected art, and although he was himself an amateur, and by no means a bad judge of pictures, he still curbed my wishes, by upsetting me with the remark, that unless I felt an inward conviction—that unless I could elevate myself into a painter of the highest order, I should often, during my life, have to feed on crusts. In saying this, my good father overlooked two essential qualities which I possessed, and which might well have led a young painter to his aim. One of these was a powerful imagination, which, as early as my eighth year, enabled me, without having enjoyed any instruction in drawing, to make a sketch with charcoal, on a white garden wall, of Marlborough's funeral, according to the French popular air, "*Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre.*" The second quality, which has never abandoned me

throughout my whole life, is diligence and iron perseverance. I still fancy that I should have made no mean painter, had free rein been given to my own earnest wishes.

Neglect of my office duties was a natural consequence. I went after all sorts of amusements, drew caricatures on my letter-stand in the counting-room, frolicked for hours together with my friend, the young and universally beloved painter Terreni, who was a great fop, and had the mania of aping the dress and manners of the Englishmen who from time to time made their appearance in Leghorn. This disease, thanks to his illustrious example, took root in my breast too; and whenever, during the course of the week, I could see a newly arrived visitor among the English, who at that time were so constantly noticed at Leghorn, but more especially at Florence, and could on the ensuing Sunday exhibit myself on the Corso attired in a similar costume, I was supremely happy. The tailor had received no order forbidding him to let me have clothes, and his account at the end of the year presented the not inconsiderable sum total of twelve coats, of all colors, and twenty-two pair of hose and pantaloons, which were just then coming into fashion. By the way, this was a hereditary propensity. So long as he lived in Italy, my father had paid great attention to his toilet, and when he left Leghorn, he took with him to Hamburgh a whole wardrobe of embroidered and laced coats of all colors, from his bottle-green gold-laced wedding coat, lined with poppy-colored satin, and worn with hose to match, to a simple coffee-colored frock—all of French cut and make. After a time, he sold the collection to Schröder, then theatrical manager at Hamburgh. The wardrobe in question had become very familiar to us all, from the regular quarterly brushings and dustings it got—and I have a very lively recollection of what occurred some time subsequent to the sale, in the theatre—whither we had gone, to see Schröder himself in the part of Count Klingsberg, in his comedy “*Die Unglückliche Ehe aus Delicatessen*”—(“Too much refinement makes unhappy matches.”) When Schröder appeared, my eldest sister, since Madame Berke-meyer, recognized the familiar garment he wore, and shouted out,



"That's papa's coat! That's papa's coat!" or, to use the Harburgh phraseology, "That's papa, his coat!"

My uncle was altogether dissatisfied with me. I cannot conjecture what ideas he formed as to the causes of my frequent absence from the counting-room, although he knew that I often repaired to the stable and went off on horseback. But the vicinity of the aforesaid stable was a dangerous one,—for, in the opposite house there lived all sorts of sirens, in the persons of two or three right pretty ballet-girls. He hit upon the lucky thought of coming to an arrangement with the Barigello, the captain of the sbirri or policemen, to have him watch my movements and make a daily report to him. One of the Swiss porters, usually styled *facchini*, belonging to our house, who had taken a liking to me, noticed the spy's hang-dog countenance in the vicinity of our office every day, and soon perceived the sort of surveillance to which I was subjected. Greatly astonished at my uncle's course, he informed me of it, and pointed out the policeman who was watching me and my movements. On the next day, the instant I observed, to use Schiller's expression in *Fiesco*, the *confiscated face* of this fellow, I pounced upon him with: *cosa volete, birbante?* [what do you want, you scoundrel?] and afterwards repeated the agreeable inquiry every time I saw him. The well laid plan, thus being discovered, had to be given up, partly because it must have been evident that I was on the look-out, and partly in consequence of the fact that the report amounted to the same thing every day, not forgetting either the ballet-girls, or my excursions on horseback.

But, a remarkable historical epoch was just then opening,—an epoch destined to exert the greatest influence on the face of Europe both territorially and politically. It affected my career in the obscure condition of an apprenticed clerk in one of the first mercantile houses of Leghorn, where, like a young colt taken from its parent, I spurned the authority placed over me, in the person of my ridiculous uncle, and rebelled at every measure taken to subdue me. This was the invasion of Italy by the French Revolutionary army under Bonaparte, and the first victorious campaign of that leader in Lombardy, whence he advanced in person

with a considerable division of his force into Tuscany. The English consul at Florence had managed to ascertain the direction and route to be pursued by this column, and as he could have no doubt in relation to its final destination and object, he, at once, dispatched an express to Mr. Udney, the English consul, then residing at Leghorn. The courier arrived on the last Saturday of June, 1796, and his appearance was followed by an immediate assembling of all the English merchants in Leghorn, at the consulate. The consul advised these gentlemen to have all their goods and merchandise conveyed, as soon as possible, on board of the English ships, then lying in the harbor, and to put themselves under the protection of a British squadron which was cruising off the roads. This squadron was small in numbers, but commanded by the already distinguished Commodore Nelson. During the whole of Sunday until late at night, and, then again, early on Monday morning, unusual activity reigned in every part of the minor port of the *Darsena* so called, and also in the outside harbor of the "molo." On Monday, about noon, the last ships stood out of the harbor with a favoring breeze.\* It was scarcely two o'clock when word was suddenly spread through the city that a column of French troops were advancing, with cavalry at their head, on Leghorn, along the great highway leading from Pisa. As the mounted force reached the Porta Pisa, a detachment of them galloped directly, outside of the fortifications, to the harbor-gate, the *Porta Colonella*, and rode straight to the *Castell' Vecchio* or fort, over which the Tuscan flag was waving. All at once we saw the flag disappear and the French tricolor, hitherto unknown to us, run up in its stead. At the same moment, a few cannon-

\* THIERS states that Bonaparte broke up the English factory at Leghorn, and that he did not succeed in capturing *all* the English ships. The truth is, that *all* the ships escaped, and that no English factory existed at Leghorn. There were many independent English houses there established, like the houses of other nations, but no such thing as an exclusive English company existed. This act of violence was committed at a time of profound peace with France, so far as we were concerned, without the least excuse. Governor Spanocchi was reproached with having extended a friendly reception to *émigrés* and foes of the Republic.

shots were discharged at the English vessels which were tacking out of the harbor, but had not yet reached the roads.

Nelson knew what he was about. I could no longer restrain my curiosity, but ran out into the large street, the *Strada Ferdinanda*, which runs in a direct line from the Porta Pisa to the Porto Colonella, and saw at the head of the cavalry a magnificent rider, far surpassing, I thought, anything of the kind I had ever previously beheld, who galloped in and alighted at the door of the Genoese banker, Dutremoul. I soon learned that it was the famous General Murat. This was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. About six, it was reported that General Bonaparte had reached the Porta Pisa. No sooner did he learn that the English residing at Leghorn, had found time to escape with their property, than he burst into a violent rage. Just at this moment, Count Spanocchi, the governor of the city, attired in his customary uniform, a blue coat, red waistcoat, and white breeches (the gala uniform consisted of a white coat with red vest and breeches), and surrounded by his officers and the first authorities of the city, approached Bonaparte, where he sat holding in his horse, and was about to offer him some words of welcome. But the general left him no time, for he cut short all the fine things he was going to say with the following lecture:—"How do you presume to appear thus in my presence? Do you not know your business better? You are a shameless fellow,—a traitor to the country! You have allowed the English to escape, and shall give strict account of it. A court-martial shall be instantly set over you,—you are my prisoner,—surrender your sword!" And with the conclusion of this Spanocchi vanished. Bonaparte's words were repeated to me the same evening in our counting-room, by my fellow-clerk, Giacomini, who had squeezed with the crowd out of the Porta Pisa, and had heard all that passed. We learned next day, that the late commandant of the city had been placed under arrest during the same night, and that the French General Vaubois would now act in his place. Scarcely had Bonaparte entered the city with his staff, and ridden to the grand ducal palace, when the police entered every house and *ordered* the windows to be illuminated, under



threat of severe penalty, in case of disobedience. The single paper then issued at Leghorn, appeared next morning with a flaming account, describing the arrival of the victor of Lodi and Arcola, with an additional paragraph stating that the city had at once been *voluntarily* illuminated. Thus I got a very fair idea of a *voluntary illumination*, and never erred in after life as to the meaning of this expression.

About eleven o'clock on the ensuing day all the foreign consuls waited upon Bonaparte, who was dismissing them very abruptly, when his glance happened to fall suddenly upon my uncle in his red consular uniform. He instantly accosted my worthy relative thus :—"What's that? An English uniform?" My uncle, overwhelmed with confusion, had just presence of mind enough left to stammer out: "No, *Padrone*" (this word was probably borrowed from the street corners). "*No, questa é l'uniforma di Amburgo!*" "No, master (or boss), this is the uniform of Hamburgh!" Having thus delivered himself, he tried to get away; but Bonaparte went on with a fierce diatribe against everything that even looked English, thought English ideas, or could have any intercourse whatever with England. "These Englishmen," said he, according to the recital of my uncle when returned to the house, "These Englishmen shall get such a lesson as they never heard of before! I march now on Vienna, and then farther northwards, where I will destroy their hiding places at Hamburgh and other places of resort, and then ferret them out in their own piratical nest!" My uncle told me that upon this outbreak, he could not keep himself from exclaiming aloud, *Birbante!* (villain!) before the whole company present, but that the sound of it was lost in the general buzz of the throng.

However, any one acquainted with my uncle, is well aware that with him the deed was often far behind the thought, and such was, no doubt, the case in the instance just mentioned.

On the *Piazza d'arme*, where the French cavalry checked public circulation with especial vigilance, the concourse of people was so great that it was almost impossible to make one's way through the crowd. As to the younger employés in our counting-room, of whom I was the very youngest, our porters had received the

strictest directions not to let any of them pass out. But I wanted to see the young hero, the man of the day, who, although not yet twenty-eight years of age, had made such havoc among the gray-beard commanders of the Austrian army, and could not make up my mind to stay nailed to my desk, copying news concerning oil, soap and Spanish liquorice, while this human phenomenon was to be seen in the near vicinity ; for I have already stated that the grand ducal palace in which he quartered, was separated from our establishment only by the mayoralty, the *Palazzo della communita*. So, I managed to slip out of the house by stealth, and to advance a few steps to the corner of the street whose entrance is formed by the two palaces. Here a coach was in attendance for the French commander, and I stood by, waiting until he should come out. At length he appeared, surrounded by a number of officers. I saw before me a diminutive, youthful-looking man, in simple uniform ; his complexion was pallid and of almost yellowish hue, and long, sleek, jet-black hair, like that of the *Talapouche* Indians of Florida, hung down over both ears. This was the victor of Arcola ! While he was taking his place on the right hand seat in the carriage and waiting for his adjutant, I had a moment's opportunity to examine him with attention :—around his mouth played a constant smile with which the rest of mankind had, evidently, nothing to do ; for the cold, unsympathizing glance that looked out of his eyes, showed that the mind was busied elsewhere. Never did I see such a look ! It was the dull gaze of a mummy, only that a certain ray of intelligence revealed the inner soul, yet gave but a feeble reflection of its light. Macbeth's words to the ghost of Banquo would almost have applied here : “there is no speculation in those eyes,” had not what was already recorded and what afterwards transpired, unmistakably shown the soul that burned behind that dull gaze. At last the coach was driven off—and an interval of seven years elapsed ere I again saw this remarkable man. He left Leghorn the next day. I must not omit mentioning that an officer of colossal but symmetrical proportions stood at the carriage-steps in an attitude of profound respect. This was the newly-appointed city-major, afterwards General Hullin, the very grenadier who, seven years previously

to the period of which I am speaking, on July 14th, 1789, at the storming of the Bastille, was the first man to scale its walls, and who subsequently attained the sad eminence of being made president of the military commission who were ordered to try, or rather to execute the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien, at Vincennes. He was also, after the battle of Jena, made Governor-general of Berlin. When the coach was gone, the by-standers related that Bonaparte had thrown a small purse, full of gold, to Hullin, with words to the effect that he must make a good use of his position, and no longer be such a simpleton as he had been heretofore. *Relata repeto*—for I neither heard nor saw any thing of this, near as I was to the carriage.

The demeanor of the French army in Leghorn was unendurable to the inhabitants of that city. A portion of their most valuable trade was taken away from them, viz. : their commerce with England. Immense masses of troops were, from time to time, marched through the city, and frequent contributions of money, equipments, &c., were levied. The troops who came in, ragged and often unshod, left the place as soon as they had been comfortably clothed, and provided with shoes to their feet. The very sight of the French national cockade had become hateful to the eyes of all the inhabitants. The common people called it “il pasticcino,” the patty-pie, and gave vent to their inward dissatisfaction in all sorts of street-ballads, one of which I still vividly remember. The last lines of it, hitting at the frequent change of troops who came to Leghorn only to be re-clad and get a new outfit, were in the popular dialect, as follows :

“ Io cledevo di veder fla pochino,  
 Che se n'andasser via questi blicconi :  
 Dia Saglata ! ne vien ogni tantino  
 Quasi, quasi dilei, Dio mi peldoni !  
 O che anche Clisto polta il palticcino,  
 O che i Soplani-son tanti minchioni !”\*

(In English : I thought that we should have seen these rascals

\* The real word used here, and beginning with C., was of a much lower character



leave the place in a short time—Good God ! more of them flock in, every moment ! A man might almost say—God forgive me !—that either Christ himself has stuck on the patty-pie, or that our princes are only so many chuckle-heads !)

Leghorn was like a camp. In the *Piazza d'arme* they had put up the statues of Liberty on a broad altar, and there the popular representatives Garat and Salicetti made long speeches to the soldiers at every daily parade. Business was at a stand-still, in all the counting-houses, our own not excepted. I sauntered about, made sketches of the French soldiery and the street-groups, invented all kinds of follies to pass away the time, and spent considerable sums of money. Antonio Antoni, the old cashier of our establishment, had too much respect for the son of his former master and the nephew of his present one, to deny me any thing ;—so he gave me all I asked, and that he had a good reason for so doing and for keeping me in a good humor, was afterwards made manifest by the circumstance that, through my uncle's negligence in looking after the books and asking for a yearly balance-sheet, the said books remained four years in arrear.

When, at length, by the advice of one of our two book-keepers, an Englishman, named Henry Betts, an attempt was made to regulate our accounts, a gradual peculation of about sixty thousand *pezza* in the four years was discovered. The other book-keeper was a brother of the unfaithful cashier, and the embezzlement was thus easily explained. Only think into what hands I had fallen, to practice and acquire the elements of commercial knowledge !

No one can give what he does not himself possess ; and if my uncle had no clear conception of a merchant's true value, or of his own duties to himself and others, it was of course impossible for him to impart correct ideas to me. Yet, all that I should have needed was here and there a hint or two from the lips of an experienced and cautious man, and such instruction would soon have brought me back to the right path. But I had to do without all this, and learned to feel their necessity only in after years. Fortunately, my good sense remained unimpaired. There was no one to store my mind with those indispensable requisites which,

as my predecessor Benecke says, in his Memoirs published by his family, were according to the judgment of such men as Brisch, Brodhagen, Ebeling, and others, *absolutely necessary* at that time, to any one who desired to attain even a *degree* of perfect acquaintance with mercantile science. These requisites were—

1. An intimate theoretical knowledge of the whole commercial system.

2. A knowledge of all commercial regulations, agreements, and the laws of trade and exchange.

3. The possession of several foreign languages ; for instance, French, English, Spanish, Italian, etc., etc.

4. Facility in calculation (Arithmetic).

5. A knowledge of Chemistry.

6. Technology.

7. The different classes and qualities of manufactured and other goods, and their materials.

8. Geometry and Mechanics (Mathematics).

9. Physics.

10. Commercial Geography.

11. The history of Trade.

12. Natural History in all its branches ; so as to have a knowledge of the first origin of various products. And, finally, when all this had been learned, the next point was—

13. Good and ready penmanship!!!

Benecke states, with perfect frankness, that he diligently applied himself to the acquisition of all these things, so as to be competent to accept a place in some counting-house. What would a pupil of the present day be likely to say to any one who, as he first presented himself in the counting-room, should ask him if he had gone through a regular mercantile education in the *preparatory* branches detailed above? Why, most assuredly he would make his escape without delay—and so should I have done.

Early in the beginning of the year 1797 my uncle determined to send his family into the country, in the neighborhood of Florence, and for that purpose rented the *Villa Pandolfini*, close by the Grand Ducal pleasure palace called the *Poggio Imperiale*, in the loveliest part of the little village of *San Leonardo*, and sent

me thither to keep my aunt company, but without appointing me any other employment. The summer slipped away in daily morning promenades to the picture gallery, and evening strolls on the *Ponte della Trinita*, where the fashionable society of Florence used to assemble, the gentlemen nearly always bareheaded, but provided with parasols and fans. There they would walk to and fro; and thither, every evening, among the throng came the fair one who had riveted my attention. Just opposite to the Villa Pandolfini lived a banker. I shall not now mention his name, but he was a widower, owned the villa he inhabited, and was often visited there by an only daughter. This banker was the person through whom my aunt received her funds, and hence our acquaintanceship was soon formed. The two young people, that is to say, Mademoiselle and I, were mutually pleased with each other. I had begun this flirtation as a mere pastime, but my young beauty took it all the more to heart. We appointed secret meetings at her villa, and sometimes even in Florence. My aunt's vigilance was aroused by these proceedings, and she forthwith wrote to her husband in Leghorn, that I would inevitably *put myself in for it*, as we used to say at Hamburgh. My uncle went still farther, and wrote to Mr. Nolte, sen., in Hamburgh, that I, already half ruined, in both body and soul, was now in a sure way to go headlong to the devil, unless he at once sent for me to come home.

My father's orders to pack me off to him were not long in reaching me, and in the month of October, my uncle Matsen, on the mother's side (afterwards Consul for Hamburgh at Naples), conducted me back to my parents. A few days of bitter reproaches, on account of prodigality and recklessness, were soon past, and my father set me to work in his own counting-house, where I fell to with such persevering zeal and diligence, that he was pleased with me beyond measure, and in the very next twelvemonth intrusted me with his bank-book—a mark of confidence seldom bestowed upon so young a man. My father saw that if I had received no proper guidance, employment, and encouragement to progress in my calling, it must have been his brother's fault. The ready ease with which I could oversee and



manage my father's business, which was quite simple, left me plenty of leisure time. I had acquired great fondness for the theatre, and visited it as often as I could. Comedies, dramas and tragedies were collected and studied with eagerness, and the French stage, which was put in operation at Hamburgh just about that time, facilitated the enjoyment of my extreme preference for everything connected with the theatrical world, which occupied me to the exclusion of other side-pursuits, and exercised all the faculties of my mind.

The arrival of a most excellent company of players, who had been driven out of Brussels, or had left it for lack of sufficient support, and among whom were several performers of considerable talent—for instance, the dramatic actors Mees and Bergamin, and the baritone singer Derübelle—occasioned the establishment of this theatre, which in a short time became the theatre of the Hamburgh fashionables. The large number of French emigrants of rank, at that time residing in Hamburgh, and also the attendance of the notabilities of Hamburgh society, secured the managers great success. The contract for printing the play-bills had fallen into the hands of a *highly-noble* and *highly-wise* city council printer, named George F. Schniebes, who looked up to Benjamin Franklin as the patron saint of his order, and did his best to imitate him, at least in dress. For he too wore a kind of fur cap on his head, mounted a pair of spectacles on his nose, and appeared in a kind of morning-gown. There was no trouble in translating the play-bill, so long as the Lexicon afforded the means of Germanizing the French titles—for instance, “La Caravane du Caire,” or, “Felix ou l'Enfant trouvé.” But whenever the dictionary was at fault, in regard to certain words, he gave them the nearest translation possible, “to the best of his knowledge and belief,” as he has often confessed to me. The first of these, that made me roar, was: “L'Amant Statue,” translated by Schniebes, The *Stiff* Lover. The next was “Œdipe a Colonne” Œdipus at Cologne. Aid can be given this man, I said to myself, maliciously, with Schiller's Robber Moor, at the end of his great play, and so offered my treacherous assistance to the city council printer in translating his theatre bills. After that the street-corners were decorated

with the following attractive placards:—"Le Maréchal ferrant"—Marshal Ferrant. "Les précieuses ridicules"—The ridiculous treasures. "Nicaise Peintre"—Painter Nick. "La Dinde aux louis"—Louis' Turkey. "La veillée et la matinée villageoise"—The old woman and a country morning. "Les amants prothées"—The lovers of tea. The whole town laughed at these absurd translations, yet it greatly displeased Mr. Schniebes when any one tried to convince him that folks were laughing at his expense, in coming to his aid with such translations. His invariable answer was, that he perfectly understood the French language himself, and moreover had an assistant, upon whose knowledge of languages he placed full reliance.

Yet a play-bill, received from Mayence, put me to shame, and far surpassed anything I could do in that line. It ran thus:—"L'Abbé de l'Épée, Instituteur des Sourds muets"—The Abbot of the Sword, Instigator of Doves and dumb people.

But the year 1799, a disastrous one for Hamburgh, was now upon us. Circumstances, which I have elsewhere described, occasioned, within the space of six weeks, some 136 failures, amounting to no less a total than 36,902,000 Marks banco, and crippled or prostrated every branch of business and business connection. The largest of these failures was that of Messrs. de Dobbeler & Hesse, for the sum of 3,100,000 Ms. banco; the next, that of J. D. Rodde, for 2,200,000 Ms. banco. Of all the rest, only the Messrs. Nootnagel, Schwartz & Roques, who failed for 1,540,800 Ms. banco, Bernhard Roosen Salomon, Son, for 1,037,000 Ms., and Axen & Hinsch, for 360,000 Ms. banco, were enabled to resume payment in a short time, and fully satisfy their creditors. Many considerable houses managed to settle up their affairs by quiet private agreement.

During this convulsive state of the Hamburgh Bourse, the London Exchange bestirred itself, since merchandise and bills of exchange could afford no immediate relief, at a time when discount had risen to fourteen per cent., and merchandise, even sugar, had fallen thirty-five per cent. in price, to render aid by cash remittances, and procured from Government the use of the frigate *Lutine*, which took on board over a million pounds sterling worth

of silver, and sailed for the Texel. I need not describe the anxiety with which the arrival of this ship was looked forward to ; it can be readily comprehended, as well as the disappointment that followed, when the mournful news reached us that the frigate had been wrecked on the Dutch coast, near the Texel, and lost, with all on board, excepting the third steersman, who alone succeeded in saving his life, and brought the disastrous intelligence.

However, one cheerful recollection remains to me from that gloomy time. It relates to the honorable and highly esteemed house of the Brothers Kaufmann, who were compelled, by the pressure of circumstances, to suspend payment, but began again a short time afterwards, and completely re-established themselves. One of these gentlemen, who had just married, had presented his wife with a ticket in the Hamburg City Lottery. The highest prize was 100,000 Marks banco. About the same time the tickets of a lottery, to be drawn for a farm worth 50,000 Prussian thalers, in the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburgh, were put in circulation, and the winning number was to be the same that should draw the prize in the Hamburg lottery. Mr. Kaufmann's bride had taken it into her head to purchase the same number as the one on her Hamburg ticket in the farm lottery, and make a present of it to her husband. Fortune favored them both, for they were the winners. I was relating this anecdote two years ago at a small dinner party, when, as I concluded, a gentleman sitting opposite to me remarked, "The incident you have been narrating, Mr. Nolte, is accurately true, for the parties you mentioned were my father and mother." This gentleman was the present Syndic Kaufmann.

The crisis had been too severely felt at Hamburg, and had affected commercial connexions of every kind too thoroughly, not to bear heavily upon my father's business, and even threaten to tear it from its hitherto quiet and steady current. This business consisted, almost exclusively, in the collection of orders and consignments for the Leghorn house, and was compelled, in view of the retrogression of all enterprising spirit on the Hamburg Bourse, which was the result of necessity, to contract its operations in proportion as the English and French war placed more



and more obstacles, in the way of everything like commerce, to and from the Mediterranean. Neither was the occupation of Hamburgh, in the spring of 1801, by the Danish troops, under Prince Charles of Hesse, exactly calculated to enliven the customary enterprising spirit of our Bourse.

The very feeble interest awakened in me by my father's business, and, to tell the truth, by anything that related to commerce, allowed me to look, with a certain degree of unconcern, upon a state of things generally critical to merchants whose capital was only moderate, and I had never taken the trouble to find out the condition of my father's pecuniary affairs. He had never manifested any trace of anxiety about himself. So I satisfied myself with a conscientious discharge of my counting-room duties, and then employed my abundant leisure time with a variety of other things. A turn for writing had taken hold of me. A paper, then conducted by Court Councillor Spazier, at Leipsic, and entitled a "Gazette for the World of Fashion," gave me an opening to write some sketches of social matters in our own city, which were penned with a certain smack of humor, accepted by the editor, and very favorably read in his paper. This thing pleased me amazingly. I worked at night, and not a soul in Hamburgh ever suspected that I was the author of these sketches.

The older and extensive houses of Hamburgh suffered comparatively little in the crisis I have described. Hamburgh, whither a large portion of the French emigration had directed their steps, and which served as a place of refuge to a part of the French nobility of the highest rank, and had received and sheltered them with its means and its hospitality, had become an extremely gay and sociable place of residence. In front of the *Dammthor*, in the direction of the *Grind-el-Allee*, had lived for some time Madame de Genlis, Generals Dumouriez and Valence; even the Duc de Penthièvre (afterward King Louis Philippe), Prince Talleyrand, and other notabilities. Several of them were to be met with in the various social circles, and at the soirées of Mr. Peter Godeffroy, which took place every Wednesday evening, might, among others, have been seen the Baron de Breteuil, who at one time played an important part at the Court of Louis

XVI., had been styled by Chamfort "a relic of the olden time," and, notwithstanding the simplicity of his life, was regarded with great respect and consideration. He attracted my attention in a very particular degree by his imposing presence and his non-committal eye. These soirées, too, had their picture drawn in the "Gazette," but, as I have just said, no suspicion alighted on me. The theatre continued to be my favorite study and pursuit. I never rested until I had completely inoculated my friend, Peter Godeffroy, jr., with my mania for the play; through him his father caught the complaint, and it spread to the whole family; so that at length the French architect Ramée, the same who had built our first Börsenhalle (Exchange), was directed to put up a stage, etc., in the large establishment of Mr. Godeffroy, and there, in the course of the winter, we all made our début. Our company consisted of fourteen persons, and among them four ladies, belonging to the first families in Hamburg. Of these, Mr. Godeffroy's two daughters, Madame R. Parish, in Niensteden, and Mrs. General Ponsett, in the Crimea, are yet living. Of the male performers, I am now the only survivor. Senator Ferdinand Schwartz, who died some years ago, displayed much talent in the comic line, when the part happened to suit his peculiar humor.

During the two succeeding years the palmy days of Hamburg's prosperity were fast drawing to a close. The business circumstances of my father, who had several years before withdrawn from the Leghorn house, but sank a considerable sum in its failure, which occurred about this time, were greatly impaired; in short, he came back, and, without making the slightest attempt to sustain himself, at once came to the resolution of compounding with his creditors for eighty-five per cent., and thus swamped nearly everything he possessed in the world.

One of his numerous friends directly afterwards placed in his hands an accumulated capital of 120,000 marks to which his old ally Sir Francis Baring, Bart., also contributed 20,000 marks by relinquishing all rates for interest, and this sum enabled my father to recommence business. He was then sixty-three years of age, and had with his advancing age not been able, after settling in Hamburg, to expand or uplift his mercantile ideas and combinations

beyond the limits of an experience gradually acquired during a long career at Leghorn. Every thing on the European continent belonging to the mercantile profession, and which the iron hand of Napoleon, that deadly foe of all commerce, had not yet seized, had soon to feel its weight in a greater or less degree; the usual avenues of legitimate profit were gradually narrowed, and at last entirely closed, and my father utterly lacked each and every quality requisite to the invention of new channels and sources of relief, not to say that he had neither the courage nor the capital to have brought to bear upon them. I could, therefore, render him no assistance,—that we both fully understood. He rejected every word of advice I ventured to offer him, as the idle talk of a presumptuous and imprudent boy; seriously thought that I cared for nothing but amusement, never took into account the inward strength and capacity I possessed, and which only required proper guidance to achieve something useful, yet was fully open to my mother's counsel, and at length approved of my proposition to separate from him and go in search of fortune to other parts of the world. I desired and made application for a place in some other country: many such openings were held out to me by numerous family-friends, who judged of me more favorably than my own father did: one of these was in the house of Löbötter and Company in Copenhagen, the other in the house of Dobrée, and the third with Messrs. A. M. Labouchère and Trotreau,—the latter two at Nantes. The last of these places was proposed to me by Messrs. Matthiesen and Sillem, who were especially friendly to me, with the idea of my conducting the German and English correspondence of the house they named. The position of this latter establishment was more important than that of the other, but their offer was unconnected with any view of my future partnership in the house itself, such as was presented to me by the Copenhagen establishment; but after mature deliberation touching my knowledge and capacity, I decided that I could make no just claim to the position offered me in Copenhagen, and thereupon concluded an agreement with the concern at Nantes for the term of three years. My friend Peter Godeffroy took my extensive library of plays off my hands, and the price they were worth



was applied to meet the expenses of my journey to Nantes, including a brief stay at Paris. I parted from my friends and parents with a heavy heart indeed, but without any concern in relation to myself and my future.

My route lay through Bremen, where I accidentally fell in with three very agreeable travelling companions,—the Count von Haxthausen, of the Royal Danish Life-guards from Copenhagen, Major Holstein of the Queen's Jägers on the Island of Amager, and a young man of fine education called Joly, from Antwerp, who left us at Brussels. At length we arrived in Paris on the eleventh day after my departure from Hamburgh. My two Danish friends went to one of the best hotels; but I, for the purpose of living economically, went, on the recommendation of our conductor, to the small Hôtel St. Pierre in the dirty little street St. Pierre de Montmartre, close by the Messageries.

It was in this place that experience first taught me how erroneous it is to suppose that any real saving can be effected in what are styled the cheap hotels, where food and lodging are vastly inferior to those found in better class-houses, and in a place like Paris, where, in those days much more than at present, they were dependent upon profits made upon strangers, the unavoidable roguery was much more repulsive and unblushing.

## CHAPTER II.

### PARIS—NANTES—AMSTERDAM.

The trial of General Moreau at Paris, when I arrived there—State of opinion in that capital—Napoleon's first parade as Emperor, on the Place du Carrousal—Departure for Nantes—My entry into the house of A. M. Labouchère and Trotreau—The two head partners—My departure from Amsterdam at the request of P. C. Labouchère, head of the firm of Hope and Co., in that city—Some notice of the history of that house, and the characteristics of its leading partner—The object of my journey to the United States and farther intentions—Unexampled business projects with the banker, G. J. Ouvrard, in Paris.

THE moment of my arrival in Paris was just at that period when the First Consul was proclaimed Emperor by the *Senatus Consultum* of the 18th of May, 1804, and General Moreau had been arrested, and was confined in prison as an accomplice in a plot against the government and the life of the First Consul. A piece of good luck befell me in Paris which I might heartily wish should be allotted to every one who visits that city for the first time, viz: that I was enabled to secure the intimacy of a friend who had long been thoroughly acquainted with the city, and who was, nevertheless, not in the least unwilling to represent the part of a regular *cicerone* in escorting the new-comer to every place of interest, but who had, moreover, acquired a knowledge of Paris life, in all its phases, and was thus enabled to obtain admission for strangers into many places not always easily accessible to them, and when there, could point out many things worthy of remark which might have escaped the notice of an inexperienced eye. Thus, for instance, access to *Frascati's*, at that time the favorite resort of the elegant Parisian world, was free to every one who had paid his entrance fee; but what good

would it have done me to walk alone through its magnificent saloons and splendidly illuminated gardens? But to learn, on such an evening, that the beautiful woman who, just at that moment, stood before me was Madame Recamier; that the elegant young man, leaning against the pedestal of a statue, was the celebrated dancer Trenis, and that the person near him, with a notebook of music in his hand, the renowned vocalist Garat, was something which rendered the presence of a well-informed and agreeable companion absolutely necessary. Such a friend it was my lot to find, and in this way I, in a few weeks, was enabled to know and understand Paris as perfectly as though I had passed a long time there. Nothing, however, of all the novelties that I had an opportunity of seeing and hearing made a deeper impression upon me than the lively and universal interest which every one around me seemed to take in the fate of the imprisoned General Moreau. His name was seldom pronounced, by the middle and lower classes, unless coupled with an expression of the greatest love and respect, and without a malediction upon both his implacable persecutors,—the First Consul and the governor of Paris, General Murat, who had in his later proclamations placarded the name of General Moreau, in large letters, on all the street corners, accompanied by the word "*traître à la République.*" No one either could or would yield any belief to the publicly proclaimed guilt of this distinguished general, and the wit of Paris did not, by any means, commit default on this occasion, for you might everywhere hear the pasquinade *il n'y a que deux partis, en France les moraux (Moreau) et les immoraux.* Moreau, as the result has shown, was not actually a participator in the plot of George Cadoudal, Pichegru, the two Polignacs, and others; but he had committed, what to a man in his station and position was an unpardonable error—he had manifested a want of decision, in seeing George Cadoudal and Polignac, and listening to them. As it has since appeared from the whole prosecution, it was not the plot itself from which he receded, but the object it had in view, viz: the restoration of the Bourbons, and it is beyond a doubt that Moreau, most probably, would not have refused his participation, in the same affair, under other



conditions. As it was, the result was inevitable. He did not deserve the sentence of death as Napoleon desired—in order that he might pardon him, and so be enabled to lower him in public estimation,—but he could not escape the banishment to which he was sentenced as a punishment for the great political crime he had committed. Moreau soon left for Cadiz, where, as it was then said, he was to embark for the United States. I never dreamed, at that time, that I should have an opportunity in later years, of knowing this man.

The first review which the new Emperor was to hold was appointed to take place at the Place du Carrousel, and my curiosity to get one more sight of this man, as Emperor, whom I, seven years previously, had seen in Leghorn as a victorious general, was indescribable. I not merely wished to see him, but to get close to his person, and have a good chance to study him. My traveling companions, Count Haxthausen and Major Holstein, who had obtained an audience at Court, were so good as to procure for me, through the Danish Minister, a special card of admission to the Gallery of the Louvre—a favor accorded to scarcely twenty persons, and I was enabled to gratify my wish. I several times saw the great man of the day surrounded by a brilliant staff, and uniforms of every description, riding up and down through the ranks, then galloping swiftly by outside of the inner court-yard, in front of the ranks of cavalry ranged along there, amid the shout of *Vive l'Empereur*, until his horse suddenly stumbled and fell, and he rolled on the earth, holding the reins of the bridle fast in his hand, but leaped to his feet in a moment, before even a part of his general staff, who came dashing up at full speed, could yield him any assistance. The newspapers observed profound silence in regard to this occurrence; but I must confess that, as I witnessed it, a thought of its ominous character impressed me at once. I have often recollected it in the course of my life, but the remembrance struck me with greater force than ever, when I first heard Talleyrand's famous words, in relation to the unfortunate result of the expedition into Russia: "*C'est le commencement de la fin.*" How correct Talleyrand's insight was into the future, is shown by an expression which he let fall from his sick bed,

after the battle of Marengo, to Ouvrard, who was paying him a visit : " I well know what the First Consul ought now to do—what his own interests, what the peace of France and the tranquillity of Europe demand of him. Two ways stand open before him : the first leads to the Federative system, which permits every Prince, after victory, to remain master in his own country, but, under conditions which are favorable to the victor. To-day the First Consul might replace the King of Sardinia, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, &c., on their thrones ; but, should he seize upon everything, annex everything, then he flings himself into a path which is interminable."

In Paris, I once more met with some old friends—not living ones, however, but the four bronze horses of Saint Mark which I had seen before the Church at Venice, in my earlier years. They were now placed upon the triumphal Arch of the Place du Carrousel : then in the Museum I saw the *Venus De Medicis*, from the Tribune of the Florentine Gallery ; the best pictures of that Gallery, such as the *Fornarina*, by Raphael, which I have visited, daily, in Florence, without ever being able to sate myself with its beauties, and the *Madonna della Sedia*, by Raphael, and *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, by Carlo Dolci, from the Grand Ducal Pitti Palace. The sight of these awakened singular, but more especially painful sensations in my bosom, when I thought of the difference between my present condition and prospects, and the times gone by when these enjoyments were first accessible to me.

I had already passed a month in Paris, and it was now time for me to pay some attention to my new calling. I therefore set out for Nantes and, on the day of my arrival there, visited the counting-room which was destined to receive me. The firm of Messrs. A. M. Labouchère & Trotreau, in pursuance of the wish of Mr. P. C. Labouchère, one of the leading partners of the house of Hope, in Amsterdam (of whom I will, hereafter, have further occasion to speak), was to replace the formerly important house of Widow Babut & Labouchère, which existed before the Revolution. The present head of the firm was the youngest brother of the P. C. Labouchère referred to, and had commenced his mercantile career in Copenhagen. The next partner in the firm was

Mr. H. Trotreau, a man well advanced in years, and one of the most respectable persons in the whole city, who possessed a large fortune, and had, at the request of his young friend in Amsterdam, lent his name to the firm so as at once to procure sufficient credit in the place. The junior head of the House was absent when I arrived. He had gone to Copenhagen to marry a young Norwegian lady—a Miss Knudson, from Drontheim. Mr. Trotreau was managing the House, but understood neither German nor English, and it so happened that the chief correspondence of the establishment, which was to be conducted by me, was in these two languages. I was, at once, intrusted by Mr. Trotreau with the task of translating all letters sent to us, in those languages, into French, and was also intrusted by him with a key to the replies that it would be necessary to make to them. I had pleased him, and won his confidence, for my replies were, without further examination, signed by him. I had never received any instruction in the French language, but had been my own teacher, and yet, as it appeared, my translations were both comprehensible and agreeable to Mr. Trotreau. When he desired to give me some information regarding the peculiar expressions and turns of phrase, my desire to arrive at a complete and thorough familiarity with them increased every day; and whenever I had finished my replies, I used to make it a point, without having been asked, to translate these also into French, and hand them to Mr. Trotreau, not only to be received, but also to be corrected by him. I made myself so perfectly familiar with the French mercantile expressions, that Mr. Trotreau declared to me that I needed no further instruction, and might, if I saw fit, also undertake the French correspondence of the House. It may readily be conceived what inward gratification this offer afforded me. The French clerk, from whose hands it was transferred, bitterly complained of this preference; but Mr. Trotreau replied, "What would you have, my friend? I read Mr. Nolte's letters with much more pleasure than yours, and I think that our correspondents will do the same."

At length the absent head of the House, Mr. A. M. Labouchère, returned with his young Danish wife. He was desirous of extending the business of the House, which frequently, through



the interference of the House of Baring, in London, received some consignments from the United States, and thought that more frequent and more accurate commercial reports not only would contribute to the popularity of his House in the United States, but would place him in the condition to outstrip in rank other Houses in Nantes.

With this, the duty was imposed upon me of making out frequent market circulars, and sending them to the United States. This was most laborious and irksome work. Mr. Labouchère had learned the addresses of many American firms, frequently from the lips of American ship-captains, with whom he came in contact, and then when I was out would deposit the long list of new names on my desk, for me to make out a corresponding number of circulars, and dispatch the same to them; and whether the firms were in Portland or Savannah, every fluctuation of the market down to the most trifling, had to be set forth. Three clerks would have been necessary to execute this mechanical labor—for nothing was known at that time of lithographic circulars, and I was too conscientious to abridge them, or to seek recreation from my severe toil by imitating the brilliant stroke of art achieved by my friend Paul Delessert, in the house of Messrs. Matthiesen and Sillem, at Hamburg. After the letters had been signed by old Mr. Sillem, the father of Mr. Jerome Sillem, they were laid before the eyes of my young friend, for him to work in a compendious market circular. This sort of work fatigued him, so one day he took it into his head to insert the following words under every letter: *Omelets are rising, owing to the extreme scarcity of eggs.* Before the mails went off, the Chef wished to take a last look at the letters, and of course instantly saw the obnoxious words of all other things. It was to be expected that no head of a commercial house would take such a master-stroke quietly, and my friend Paul had to leave the office in a hurry. But I was not the only one who found this constant transmission of circulars extremely burthensome. The houses to whom they were sent, particularly the American firms, had every reason to be sick of them; for they were frequently dispatched in vessels sailing to some port in Maine, to be sent thence as far very often as Savan-

nah, and had to go overland, subject to the, at that time, enormous American postage. One day Mr. Labouchère came in, from the post-office, with a letter bearing an enormous *Paimbœuf* stamp (*Paimbœuf* is, properly speaking, the *port* of Nantes),—and holding it up before me, remarked, as he broke the seal; “There, Mr. Nolte!—a consignment, no doubt, from America!” But, when he had got it out of the envelope, the contents of the packet were discovered to be some thirty of our circulars, nearly all in my handwriting, which the recipients had amused themselves by re-enclosing to our address.

Another packet of the same kind arrived by post at *Paimbœuf* a few weeks later. Upon this occasion Mr. Labouchère seemed quite certain that all was right. He tore open the envelope with incredible eagerness, and discovered a Dutch Price-current of stuffed birds, dried fish, frogs and tortoises, butterflies, beetles, and shells of every description—all things for which Mr. Labouchère had an especial preference, and of which he kept a small collection himself. The price-current was from a man in Rotterdam, to whom he had made himself known, and sent a card.

This canvassing for consignments from the United States, and the kind of uneasiness which Mr. Labouchère betrayed, whenever his neighbors, Messrs. Hottinguers & Co., a branch of the Paris banking house, received important consignments from the United States—frequently whole fleets at a time—were to me inexplicable—so I asked my chief what the real cause of this anxiety could be. His reply invariably was: “Large advances, probably!” My next question was: “And who makes these advances? how are they made?” His answer: “I am ignorant of that!” or “I do not know.” At length, however, I learned from one of the Hottinguer clerks, with whom I had struck up a friendship, that the house of Messrs. Baring accepted bills drawn as an advance, in the United States, took out the insurance, and after sale took charge of the remittances for the merchandise. From this information, I for the first time got a key to this whole system, so universally understood at the present day, but of which I had never received the least hint at my father’s house in Leghorn, nor under his own eye in Hamburgh; nor, as the reader may

have observed, even in Nantes, up to that time. Upon making this original and important discovery, I immediately went to Mr. Labouchère. The firm of Messrs. Hope, in Amsterdam, and the house of Messrs. Baring, in London, had been mentioned in the circulars of the Nantes house as its especial friends; and indeed, with the additional remark that Mr. P. C. Labouchère, in Amsterdam, the brother of my chief, was the associated partner of one, and the son-in-law of the "Chevalier" Francis Baring, (Sir Francis Baring, Bart.) one of the leading partners of the other. "I cannot understand," said I to Mr. Labouchère, "how you can let such important advantages as are within your reach remain unimproved, and to a certain degree wholly neglected. All that the Messrs. Hottinguer get, you also might have. You must of necessity send some one to the United States, and if you can find no better agent, I am at your disposal—I am ready to go thither!" A couple of weeks after that, he asked me to reduce to writing my ideas concerning the United States, and the advantages of a visit to that country, and send them to his brother in Amsterdam, who must have discovered from my correspondence with the house of Hope & Co., what I could do, and who had asked him to make the present request of me. It was Saturday when I received the above intimation. I shut myself up all day on Sunday, threw my ideas in relation to the desired plan on paper, wrote it over three or four times in the very best French I could muster, and the next morning took my work to Mr. Labouchère, to have him examine it, and transmit it to his brother, if it pleased him. Mr. Labouchère read it over, and instantly exclaimed: "Why, that is excellent! It is perfect! It would be impossible to speak more to the point! Whom have you been consulting?" I replied with truth: "Nobody! Whom should I consult?" I now understood what I had already for some time been fancying to myself—that my chief either did not know how to estimate his own position, or that something lay in the background which they either wished or were obliged to conceal from me. My communication was sent. Some nine or ten days had to elapse, before I could get a reply from Amsterdam. I got none, but about ten days later, Mr. Labouchère called me into his



private office, and told me that his brother had commissioned him to send me directly to Amsterdam, and to release me from my three years' contract. This was done. My curiosity excited to the highest degree, I bade farewell to my friends in Nantes, and set out on my journey. My anxiety to reach Amsterdam as soon as possible did not, to my great regret, allow me to remain more than a few days in Paris; but my haste was not so much use to me after all, for I had scarcely reached Brussels when I was attacked with fever-and-ague, and only arrived in Amsterdam after a fortnight's delay.

The next morning I repaired to the counting-house of Messrs. Hope, but as it was almost time to go on 'change, found no one there but a brother of Mr. Labouchère.

The house of Hope and Co. in Amsterdam consisted at that time of the head partner of the whole concern, Mr. Henry Hope, who, as the son of a Scottish loyalist settled in Boston, had been born in the United States, and had emigrated to England after the first invasion of Holland by the French republican army under Pichegru; then of several members of the Hope family, Adrian, Thomas L. Hope, (the well known "Furniture Hope," who had written a work on antique furniture,) and Henry Philip Hope, who resided sometimes at the Hague, sometimes in England, had capital and interests in the Amsterdam firm, but, as sleeping partners of the concern, were never known nor mentioned in it by name. The management of the house was in the hands of Mr. John Williams, an Englishman, who had married the niece of Mr. Henry Hope, and afterwards assumed the name of John Williams Hope, but in the latter years of his life called himself John Hope, under the authority of a royal patent signed by George IV. as Prince Regent. Beside this gentleman stood, as the most active member of the house, the very soul in fact of the concern, Mr. P. C. Labouchère, whom I have already named. This distinguished man, born at the Hague, was the son of a French dry-goods merchant residing there,—a native of Orthés in Bearn, who had sent the young man to his brother, of whom we have already spoken, established in Nantes, there to commence the mercantile career marked out for him. There, young Labor

chère exhibited so many evidences of intelligence and industry, that his uncle felt desirous of opening before him a broader field than he could pretend to offer in his own establishment, and as it just so chanced about the time in question that his friend Mr. Hope had commissioned him to send him an active and capable clerk to take charge of his French correspondence, he proposed his nephew to that gentleman, who accepted the youth's services and engaged him provisionally on an agreement for three years with a fair salary. Shortly before the close of this term, young Labouchère gave his principal a hint that a moderate increase of salary was desirable. An answer was promised for the next morning. When he went at the appointed time to receive the anticipated reply, old Mr. Hope laid before him for his signature a contract already drawn up, in which he named him as his partner, with a suitable share in the profits, and intrusted him with the signature of the house. Mr. Labouchère was at that time but twenty-two, yet ere long assumed the highly respectable position of head of the firm, the first in the world, and studied the manners of a French courtier previous to the Revolution: these he soon made so thoroughly his own, that they seemed to be a part of his own nature. He made a point of distinguishing himself in every thing he undertook by a certain perfection, and carried this feeling so far, that, on account of the untractable lack of elasticity in his body and a want of ear for music which nature had denied him, he for eighteen years deemed it necessary to take dancing-lessons, because he saw that others surpassed him in the graceful accomplishment. It was almost painful to see him dance. The old school required, in the French quadrilles, some *entrechâts* and one or two pirouettes, and the delay they occasioned him always threw him out of time. I have often seen the old gentleman, already more than fifty, return from a quadrille covered with perspiration. Properly speaking, he had no refined education, understood but very little of the fine arts, and, notwithstanding his shrewdness and quickness of perception, possessed no natural powers of wit, and consequently was all the more eager to steal the humor of other people. He once repeated to myself as a witty remark of his own to one of his clerks, the celebrated answer of De Sartines, a former

chief of the French police, to one of his subordinates who asked for an increase of pay in the following words: "You do not give me enough—still I must live!" The reply he got was: "I do not perceive the necessity of that!" Now, so hard-hearted a response was altogether foreign to Mr. Labouchère's disposition, as he was a man of most excellent and generous feeling. He had, assuredly without intention, fallen into the singular habit of speaking his mother-tongue—the French—with an almost English intonation, and English with a strong French accent. But he was most of all remarkable for the chivalric idea of honor in mercantile transactions, which he constantly evinced, and which I never, during my whole life, met with elsewhere, in the same degree, however numerous may have been the high-minded and honorable merchants with whom I have been thrown in contact. He fully possessed what the French call "*des idées chevalaresques*."

I had seen this remarkable man, (who, by the way, was married to the second daughter of Sir Francis Baring in London,) at Hamburgh, when the failure in that city of the former very extensive house of Martin Dörner who, as banker for the Russian loan, was a correspondent of Hope and Co., had called him thither. He took that occasion to present himself to my father with a letter of recommendation from his old London friend; but I merely saw him, as I was too young and too inexperienced to form any but a partial opinion of him, even when he passed a day with us at Eppendorf; only his elegant manners had attracted and pleased me, and long remained in my memory. They had inspired me with a species of awe. When, summoned by himself, I again saw him at Amsterdam, it was on 'change. I had not, as already intimated, found him in his office, and was conducted to him by his younger brother, Samuel P. Labouchère, the still surviving partner of Hope and Co. We found him at the Bourse, leaning with his back against a pillar and surrounded by a swarm of jobbers and runners, acting entirely on the defensive, that he might get breath. Twenty-five years later, I saw, leaning against that very identical pillar, his successor in the house of Hope and Co., Mr. Jerome Sillem from Hamburgh, not, either, without remarking the singular contrast between the manners of these two



distinguished merchants. Mr. Labouchère, who had the highest respect for his friend Sillem, on account of his truly practical good sense in all things, and his unusually penetrating sagacity, and was in the habit of calling him "a rough diamond," would put aside the runners who beset him, with great seriousness but also with much dignity, while Sillem, on the other hand, would snarl very fiercely at them, and frequently pushed them violently out of his way with both hands, and as much rudeness of manner as possible. After 'change hours, if he again chanced to meet these gentry, he would lift his hat with a very subservient air, indeed. "Here," he would say to me, "they are not troublesome,—but on 'change I have to be rude in order to get rid of them." Yet, be it here remarked, to do this required no especially severe effort. The outward conventional forms of politeness, particularly those of French device, were not in accordance with his nature, and hung about him like an ill-fitting garment. He understood politeness where he considered it appropriate, rather in the English sense—he substituted for it a certain heartiness and readiness to serve those with whom he had intercourse.

After the close of the Bourse, Mr. Labouchère placed my arm confidentially in his, and said, "Let us take a walk; we will be able to converse undisturbed, and to better purpose, than in the counting-room. I have very often been pressed, by my brother, to give him permission to send an agent to the United States, but never would listen to his request, until he made mention of you and your wishes. I think that I have a perfect knowledge of you, and understand you, from your correspondence, and that you may be useful to him, to yourself, and to us all."

The "us all" sounded very pleasantly in my ears, for under the word *us* was given to understand a mission for the important house of Messrs. Hope itself. I instantly said, "How is that? Us all?"

"I will tell you," he continued. "To make your first appearance as agent for the house of my brother is a very good preliminary introduction to the United States, and you can, according to the directions and hints I will give you, carefully look about you there a couple of months, until we shall have some further addi-

tional need of your services. Even were you not to make one single bargain, I should still be well enough satisfied ; but I have something better in store for you. You will be intrusted with a mission that will make you catch your breath to hear of. You will feel the ground heaving under your feet," &c., &c.

And here he began to sketch for me the outline of a really colossal undertaking he was then planning in his own mind, and with which the reader shall presently be made better acquainted.

He then pointed out the position he had in view, and the heavy responsibility that would rest upon my shoulders. He was right. I did catch my breath at the magnificence of his project. Ere I had put a hand to it, I at once declared to Mr. Labouchère that I was too young and inexperienced to assume such a responsibility, and that I should only in a moderate degree equal his expectations. His answer was—

"That is my business, and not yours. I have but one thing to recommend to you : never commit any action which may one day cause you to blush before me, or in the presence of your own conscience !"

I was now placed upon the right ground. He had correctly judged me, and I had understood him perfectly. At length we touched upon the question, how much salary I was to receive for all this. He replied—

"Nothing ! Your expenses will be liberally paid ! that is all. If you cannot foresee what a position such a part may secure for you in the commercial world, and the facilities which it cannot fail to open for you in the future, you had better stay at home."

My reply was that his extreme confidence honored me, and that I would unconditionally agree to all that he saw fit to point out to me.

"In order to progress," he added, "you must renounce all impatience to succeed."

The leaven of impatience which he had perhaps discovered in me did not, however, belong to personal account. A glance at the circumstances and prospects of my family, whom I had left in Hamburgh—my father, as I have already remarked, was in his sixtieth year when I parted from him—was the stimulus which

kept alive within me this burning desire for rapid progress and early success.

The business, of which Mr. Labouchère had communicated only to me a rough outline, and which I got to understand and form an opinion of, in its whole extent, only several months later in the autumn of 1805, originated in one of the many conceptions and combinations of Mr. G. J. Ouvrard, formerly a celebrated banker, afterwards transformed into the *munitionaire general*, who published his own memoirs in three volumes, during the year 1826.

What he has communicated in those volumes, concerning his relations with the house of Hope & Co., consists in detached, imperfect, and disconnected fragments. The following will unfold the whole plan to my readers, and I hope render it perfectly comprehensible. However, before I enter upon the narrative, I consider it necessary to say many things about this remarkable man which deserve to be rescued from oblivion, and greatly contribute to a true and faithful sketch of him. He was in reality a remarkable phenomenon, and the times in which he lived were well adapted to make one of a man so strangely framed, and yet possessing such lofty intelligence. He can scarcely be reproached for not having been able, in drawing his own portrait, to avoid the favorite habit of most autobiographers, who generally, in this or that characteristic, paint a much more flattering picture of themselves than the nature of the object would justify; for the extraordinary facility with which he schemed and executed the most incredible business combinations might well excuse an overplus of vanity. Nor should we fail to observe, that in the whole tenor of his self-written memoirs, there is nowhere anything pretentious, nothing boastful of what he has done, but only a certain desire for celebrity. And if I have spent a little more time, in referring to these characteristics of Ouvrard, than the influence of his business combinations upon my own fortune would seem to render necessary, it has been done with the view to bring forward some characteristic traits of one of the most remarkable episodes in the history of Napoleon's empire, which the majority of that great man's biographers either did not know, or have not felt disposed to communicate.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE BANKER AND GENERAL PURVEYOR, G. J. OUVRARD.

His origin and business development—First great speculation—The founding of his establishment at Paris—His private intimacies lead to acquaintance with the Director Barras and Brigadier Chief Bonaparte, before the appointment of the latter to the rank of General—The rapid rise of Ouvrard, as a government contractor—He becomes the Mæcenas of artists—His princely liberality—Nicolo Isouard, the composer—Ouvrard's first connexion with the Spanish Government—Immense transactions with the French Government, with Vanlerberghe and with Duprez—Ouvrard's journey to Madrid—His influence with the Prince of Peace—The business contract between King Charles IV. of Spain and Ouvrard—Results of this contract—The commercial treaty that sprang from it—Hope & Co. in Amsterdam—The inconsiderate condemnation of Ouvrard, and frivolous palliation of Napoleon's unjust course towards him by Thiers, in the sixth volume of his *History of the Consulate*.

J. G. OUVRARD was the son of the owner of a considerable paper manufactory, in the French province of Bretagne ; first saw the light in the year 1770, on an estate in the near neighborhood of Clisson, and had been educated in the college of that place. Introduced, as early as the age of seventeen, into a large colonial produce establishment at Nantes, he there, ere he had yet reached his twentieth year, set up a similar business for himself, under the firm-name of *Guertin & Ouvrard*, in 1788, shortly before the outbreak of the Revolution. He himself relates how he got his first ideas of the powerful levers of credit, from seeing Mr. Graslin, the builder of the new town of Nantes, in order to pay the hands he had employed in this work, put in circulation a kind of paper money, which was made payable at sight, but only in copper coin. These notes, which had attained extensive circulation,

but had fallen into momentary discredit without any plausible reason, through the malice of some ill-disposed persons, were suddenly presented all at the same time, and the same means which had once worked so well with the English Bank\* likewise answered the purpose in this case, since the time required by the daily and continuous payment of the notes in copper coin was sufficient to give Mr. Graslin elbow-room to clear his way and gather in his scattered resources. At length, as people saw this liquidation going forward, for whole days together, the panic gradually subsided with daily increasing rapidity, until finally the holders of the notes altogether ceased presenting them. This example was by no means thrown away upon young Ouvrard. Soon after, the taking of the Bastille, on the 14th July, 1789, stamped upon the Revolution, which had just begun, the seal of a completed fact, and left free course to public speech, and to entire liberty of the press. Young Ouvrard hereupon conceived the idea that there would be a great deal of writing and printing, and that consequently paper would become scarce. Sustained by some business connexions he had formed, and by the credit of his father, he had concluded with all the paper manufactories in the neighboring districts of Poitou and Angoumois, a contract for every sheet of paper that they could deliver during the next two years. Ouvrard had made a correct calculation; paper began to be scarce everywhere, and to rise in price; and he finally succeeded, soon after that, in disposing of his contract to the heavy booksellers, Dufrat Brothers, in Tours, and several other publishers in Nantes, for a bonus of 300,000 francs. This operation, a very considerable operation for a beginner of scarcely twenty, stimulated his taste for speculation. He began to reckon up the unavoidable effect of

\* Before the Pretender Stuart had lost the battle of Culloden, in the year 1745, and his army had advanced as far as Derby, there was a kind of panic on the Bank of England, and everybody rushed in to get their notes exchanged for coin. The directors, in order to save themselves, hit upon the plan of swelling the throng by a host of their own emissaries, who were paid off in silver sixpences, and then passing out at one door, and returning into the Bank through another, and brought back the sixpences. In this way time was gained, and the panic gradually subsided.

the Revolution on the French colonies, and, foreseeing the certain decrease of importation thence, united with the heavy house of Baour & Co., in Bordeaux, still existing at the present day, in very large speculations in sugar and coffee, and thereby, while still quite young, in a short time became a millionaire. But in Nantes, the consequences of the Revolution, and the bloody rule of the monster Carrier, had deprived innumerable families of their head, spread mourning and woe through others, and in all directions produced deep and unusual despondency. Ouvrard's customary business having ceased, he turned soldier, rose to the rank of Chief of Battalion, and as such was sent, by General Canclaux, to Paris, to carry to the Convention a number of standards, taken in the fight of Torfou. Upon this occasion he became well acquainted with Paris, and speedily discovered it to be the oral theatre, where he would have the best chance of developing his love of speculation, and putting his projects into execution. Hereupon he determined to remain in Paris, and there found an extensive mercantile house. This he proceeded to do, pushing forward his ventures in colonial produce in combination with several capitalists in Bordeaux with so much success, that but a short time had elapsed ere he had made enormous sums, and found himself at the head of several millions of money, a capital which no one there could boast of at that time, and which, so soon as the social relations of Paris had been restored, gave him extraordinary preponderance in that city.

He had become acquainted with Madame Tallien, so celebrated for her beauty and wit; was her lover; through her got to know the Director Barras, and saw at her house no less a person than Bonaparte, who was at that time a mere Chief of Brigade in the artillery, and in such needy circumstances, that he found himself obliged to take advantage of a decree of the Committee of Public Safety, which entitled all officers placed in active service to a donation of as much cloth as was required to make a military coat, vest, and pantaloons. Bonaparte's application was rejected, because he was not just at that time in active service. A couple of words from Ouvrard to Madame Tallien were, however, sufficient to obtain from that lady a letter of recommendation for young



Bonaparte to Lefeuve, the Commissary of the 17th military division ; and the result of this recommendation was, that Bonaparte got what he desired—cloth enough for his new uniform. In after years, when Bonaparte was every day attaining higher distinction and importance, and early began to show symptoms of dislike to Ouvrard, this otherwise keen and skilful man could seldom refrain from narrating the anecdote, with a sarcastic smile ; while, on the contrary, the player Talma, who had become intimate with Bonaparte, and had often replenished his empty purse, grew more and more reserved, in his communications and his demeanor, the higher his friend ascended the ladder of fortune.

The Director Barras, to whom all that remained of good French society, after the Reign of Terror, looked in those days, and who was thoroughly competent to form a correct estimate of Ouvrard's financial talents, made use of his influence with Pléville Peley, then Minister of the Marine, to sustain Ouvrard's efforts to replace the Commissariat of the four Régisseurs by private contracts and deliveries, and thus this gentleman was at length appointed *Munitionnaire Général* of the Marine, and intrusted with the charge of providing all that might be needed for it. These deliveries ran up to no less a sum than 63,973,494 francs, which Ouvrard furnished. Pléville Peley's successor in the Ministry of the Marine was the well known Admiral Bruix. When the latter had been ordered by the Directory to proceed from Brest to Cadiz, with a fleet of twenty-five ships, to bring away the Spanish fleet lying in that port, under Admiral Massaredo, and escort them to Brest, and succeeded in accomplishing this perilous task, notwithstanding the watchfulness of the combined British squadrons, Ouvrard also undertook the provisioning of the Spanish fleet at Brest, and carried on this business for some years after their return to Cadiz so skilfully, that at the conclusion of his contracts he had put in his pocket a clear gain of fifteen millions of francs. Ouvrard had become so omnipotent as a financier, that every one that wanted to borrow came to him ; and even the Directory, which had at the time when the expedition to Egypt was crowned with the greatest success, still found itself in extraordinary embarrassment, occasioned by the simulta-

neous defeats of the republican armies in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, borrowed from him the sum of ten millions of francs, which he advanced to it with the greatest readiness and facility. After Bonaparte's return from Egypt and the fall of the Directory, the First Consul desired Ouvrard to let him have the sum of twelve millions. The latter was not disposed to accede to this request, so application was made to the other bankers of Paris, and the will, perhaps the means, was also found wanting in them. The First Consul, who would not listen to a refusal, was exasperated to the last degree, and became still more so, when Ouvrard took it into his head to make some inquiry concerning the ten millions he had lent to the Directory. A couple of days afterwards this sum was paid back by his order to Ouvrard, but in a way that amounted to drawing the pen across the whole debt—that is to say, in drafts on the already expended revenues of the bygone year. At the same time Ouvrard was put under strict arrest, under the pretence that he had treated the government badly, and made exorbitant charges against it, in the execution of his contracts for the navy. His papers were sealed up, and a commission of six State Councillors appointed to examine into the state of his affairs. It turned out that Ouvrard had contracted no debts, and that in landed property and money and in French rents, which at that time were worth only fifteen francs, he possessed a capital of twenty-seven millions. Upon this occasion a discovery was made which deeply wounded the French Consul, namely, that during Bonaparte's absence in Egypt, Ouvrard had supplied the pecuniary necessities of Josephine, who had remained behind at Malmaison; and that she had thus become to a considerable degree his debtor. This circumstance, taken together with the banker's refusal to lend him the twelve millions, awakened in the bosom of the First Consul the most violent antipathy to Ouvrard, whose arrest revolted all Paris, more particularly the financial men, and called forth loud complaints. Collot, a subsequent Director of the Mint, who was among the most intimate advisers of Bonaparte, did not hesitate to remark to the First Consul that it was a bad beginning to give any one the right to be disturbed by such arbitrary measures. "A man,"

responded Bonaparte, "who possesses thirty millions, and thinks nothing of it, is much too dangerous for my position." Through the interposition of Josephine and some of the first notabilities of the city, the intended step of arraigning Ouvrard at Marseilles before a military commission was not carried out, and he was released. As a set off for this clemency, he was placed under the especial watch of some gendarmes. This however did not prevent him from pursuing his usual course of life, nor from making *Castle Raincy* (which in after years fell to the Duchess of Berry), a rendezvous for the best society of the capital and all foreigners of note. There he used to receive and entertain them with princely hospitality, which he was able to do, soon after the peace of Amiens with the celebrated Mr. Fox and Lord Erskine. He also became the Mæcenas of artists, whom he was accustomed to recompense with munificent liberality. The reader will perhaps allow me, ere I return to him and his connection with the Messrs. Hope, in Amsterdam, to relate an anecdote of him which was confided to me, and which is but little known.

The Hôtel de Salm, which, in the latter days of the Consulate and the beginning of the Empire, had become one of the most magnificent resorts where the élite of French society were accustomed to sojourn, had called together an extraordinary assembly to hear several selections from a new opera, written by a young and promising composer. Both artists and amateurs, were in an equal degree enchanted with this quite original and most charming music. Among these was Ouvrard, who was indefatigable in testifying his admiration to the young composer. It was quite late at night when Ouvrard returned. As he was passing through the court of the hotel to his carriage he saw, lying on the ground, a paper, the form of which, and the stamp it bore, at once informed him that it must be the official notification of a sheriff's officer (*un exploit d'Huissier*). To pick it up quickly, spring into his carriage, and drive off to his own hotel, was the work of a moment. Scarcely had he reached his residence ere he examined the paper, and discovered that it was one of the customary protests which leave the person to whom it is sent no other alternative, than either to pay the required debt upon the spot, or to be shut



up in the Hotel de Clichy, the common prison for insolvent debtors. Ouvrard read further on, and, to his great surprise, found on the paper the name of the young composer whose music had so enchanted him. The trouble was about a sum amounting to three thousand francs; and for such a trifling sum as this, a young man of genuine talent was to be compelled to sacrifice a brilliant future. Ouvrard felt the force of this, and instantly formed his resolution; so on the next day the young artist received the following letter:—

“Be at your ease, Sir! What you lost yesterday evening at the Hotel Salm has fallen into safe hands. The finder considers himself fortunate in having made a discovery which places it in his power to become useful to a man whose talent and worth he can thoroughly appreciate. In the meanwhile comfort yourself with the intelligence, that at this moment your creditor has *no further claim* on you. The finder of your document begs you to pardon the feeling of curiosity which impelled him to read a paper belonging to you without your permission. As he takes a lively interest in your future, and knows perfectly well how material obstacles bear down with leaden weight the most splendid capacities, he begs you to accept the enclosed ten notes of one thousand francs each. No thanks, dear Sir, for what is merely a trifling advance upon the future success of your exertions! What your friend expects of you, however, is only perseverance in the right path you have chosen, and a continued effort, on your part, to deserve the fame that awaits you; and the gratification this will bring him will assuredly far, far exceed the little service he now seeks to render you.”

The man to whom this letter was sent was Nicolo Isouard, the afterwards celebrated composer, whom we have to thank for the splendid French operas, “Le Rossignol,” “Cendrillon,” and “Jeannot et Colin,” which for so many years constantly filled the house of the “Opera Comique.”

Neither at that time, or for very many years afterwards, did there exist in Paris such a fortune as had now fallen to the lot of

one single man, who, like Ouvrard, had passed a life of such unexampled liberality, and sometimes to the last degree of lavish expenditure. He had in Paris three houses, the firms Girardot & Co., Cinot, Charlemagne & Co., and Charles Rougemont & Co., under his control, and had established three in Brest, Bordeaux, and Orleans, so that his influence had become almost omnipotent. Immense as his more than princely expenditure had become, it still did not amount, as he frequently affirmed, to more than one-third part of his income.

Napoleon's subsequent Arch-Chancellor, Cambacères, was the man who had placed Ouvrard at the head of his financial organization (Comptabilité). It was of course to be expected, under these circumstances, that he would have more envious rivals than friends. But it was not envy, but the supremacy of an impatient ambition, which could endure no other greatness beside his own, unless it had its origin in him which made the remarkable man who then held the destinies of France in his grasp, Ouvrard's sworn enemy.

Among the causes already mentioned of Napoleon's secret dislike to Ouvrard, were others, which, in the eyes of so excitable and ambitious a temperament as that of Bonaparte, were looked upon as crimes. All Paris had already known, for a long time, that not only was Napoleon by no means insensible to the almost fabulous beauty of the celebrated actress Mademoiselle Georges, but that he also had openly become the first and most favored of her admirers, and figured as a victor where other aspirants had met with signal defeat. This *liaison* was not secret to any one, not even to Josephine the empress. Moreover, she was in no position to restore the often wavering fidelity of the Emperor, since she herself had much to be forgiven, notwithstanding all that was daily said in the official columns of the "Moniteur" concerning the undeviating wedded faith of Josephine.

Napoleon, who, up to that time as a mere General, had found no special occasion to plume himself upon any great success with the fairer half of creation, was more fortunate as Emperor, and was readily listened to by the rival beauties of the day. In Mademoiselle Georges, the loveliest woman of her time, he flattered

himself that he really had made a complete conquest, looked upon her as his exclusive property, became enamored and jealous. Among the intelligence which he received from Paris, on the day after the battle of Austerlitz, was a message from his Minister of Police, informing him that Mademoiselle Georges had passed several days at Ouvrard's pleasure palace of Raincy, and had there performed one of her very best parts. General Berthier, who had hastened onward four-and-twenty hours in advance of the Emperor, on his return from Vienna, instantly sent for Ouvrard, and intimated to him that this circumstance had in no light degree contributed to exasperate the Emperor, and accelerate his hasty return to Paris.

I had seen and admired Mademoiselle Georges the preceding year, during the short period I spent in Paris, on my journey to Amsterdam; and limited as my sojourn in that capital had been, I still had found an opportunity to get a peep at life behind the scenes of the new imperial régime. The literary circles of the capital were just at that moment taken up with a new tragedy, which the celebrated play-writer and poet Renouard was then preparing to bring out in the Théâtre Français, under the title of "Les Templiers" (The Templars). The part of Ignaz de Molay, the Grand Master of the Templars, was in the hands of Talma; the parts of the King and the Queen were given to Lafond and Mademoiselle Georges. The rehearsals had been finished. The time for the first performance fixed upon, and the intended presence of the Emperor and Empress everywhere announced.

Paris at that time was in a buzz with all kinds of anecdotes about the remarkably splendid set of diamonds which had been offered to the Empress by the court jeweller Fossin, and which consisted of a diadem, necklace, and pendants for the ears. The price which had been asked for this superb ornament was half a million of francs; and, unless my memory fails me, I recollect to have heard at that time of another smaller sum, that is to say, about three hundred thousand francs. Josephine, whose purse was always empty, in consequence of her propensity for extravagance, had expressed a desire to obtain possession of these diamonds, but the Emperor would not hear of either of these sums.



Paris had a great deal to say concerning the scenes that passed between Josephine and Napoleon in consequence of this affair; they were the ever-recurring topic of conversation among the ladies generally, to whose curiosity the jeweller was indebted for very frequent visits. People wanted to see what it was that an Emperor could deny to his Empress.

On the appointed day, placards announcing the first representation of "The Templars" were visible at all the street corners.

I had been so fortunate as to procure a parquet ticket for a seat on the second row of benches, from which I could get a good view of the imperial pair. I saw them enter their box, on the left of the house, and take their seats, Napoleon foremost and Josephine close beside him. In the beginning of the second act, their majesties the king and queen appeared upon the stage. Mademoiselle Georges, in the full splendor of her incomparable charms and her splendid figure, heightened the imposing scene by a dazzling diadem, ear-drops, and necklace, all glittering with the most superb diamonds. As she approached the imperial box, Josephine, who was leaning forward on the front rail, betrayed a hasty movement of surprise, and then suddenly, as if struck by lightning, sank back into her seat—for in the magnificent adornment of the actress she had recognized the jewels she was so anxious to possess. During this little episode in the imperial box, Napoleon remained, as might have been expected, entirely unmoved. For the Parisian world such an incident as this was a regular mine of fresh anecdotes concerning the scenes which they opined must have taken place in the private chambers of the Tuilleries, after their majesties returned from the theatre.

I merely repeat what I saw and heard. Moreover, Napoleon, although in his earlier days as a general, had not always been fortunate in his advances to the fair sex, was never at any time an indifferent observer of female beauty on the stage. When he marched into Milan, the capital of Lombardy, as victor, after the battles of Lodi and Arcola, Grassini, the greatest dramatic cantatrice, and also the greatest beauty of her time, was singing at the *Teatro della Scala*. The victorious General, who never dreamed of a successful resistance, nevertheless encountered it in the per-

son of this lovely *prima donna*, the aunt of Julia Grisi, who afterwards became so celebrated. She would not listen to him. Now it so happened that Madame Grassini was once more the *prima donna* of the Della Scala Theatre when Napoleon again returned to Milan, to place the iron crown of the Italian kingdom on his head. The motto it bore, "Gare à qui me touche!" was one which Madame Grassini had not thought of adopting for herself. Old love does not burn, says the proverb, and that was also Napoleon's sensation as he met Madame Grassini for the second time. The acquaintanceship between the everywhere victorious leader and the equally successful cantatrice, had now no longer any obstacle in its way. Napoleon—and I am indebted for this story to Madame Grassini herself, whom I again saw some years after in a Paris salon—once ventured to ask her, in one of those moments when even a twice-crowned head will lay aside its dignity, why she had in former years so disdainfully rejected his addresses, and now gave them so ready a hearing—surrendered to him in fact all that she had to yield. "Ah, Sire!" was her reply, "you were then but a little whiffet of a general—now you are an *emperour* (such was her Italian accent)—that is *quite* a different thing!" Napoleon, she told me, laughed very heartily at this, and said, "You are right! That makes it *doux*" (or *deux*, as she would call it).\*

But let us return to Ouvrard himself. About four millions of piastres remained in his hands, from the proceeds of his contracts for the Spanish navy, in royal drafts on the Mexican treasury. He revolved in his own mind the idea of going in person to New Spain to realize this capital, with the intention of then applying it as the basis of some gigantic business-combinations he thought of bringing to bear in the East Indies. He was, however, compelled to abandon this scheme, in consequence of the First Consul denying him permission to leave the country. Bonaparte, who was just then busied with the campaign that terminated on the field of Marengo, needed money—and he had learned to feel that,

\* The humor of this play on words is lost, in translation. Where the Emperor intimates that his exalted rank gives a zest to their *liaison*, Madame Grassini's imperfect accent creates quite a different meaning.—*Trans.*

in Ouvrard he possessed the only man who could procure it for him, and, for the time being, suppressed his secret dislike to so useful an ally. He caused General Berthier to summon Ouvrard into his presence, and addressed him in the following words: "Now, Mr. Ouvrard, will you give me twelve millions of francs? we shall then understand each other! You know already what I think of your transactions with the Marine Department!" The reply to this was: "General! I have four to ask of you." After a good deal of argument pro and con, says Ouvrard, "I received an order for the four millions. This appearance of integrity seduced me," he goes on to say; "but more than all, the manifold promises the First Consul made me; and yet still, the very most of all,"—this is his own confession,—“my innate taste for great operations was what induced me to accept the part offered me by Napoleon, of contractor-general to the government.”

Under these circumstances Ouvrard was obliged to give up his projected visit to Mexico. But he procured from the Spanish government the passports requisite for a trip into that country, for his brother, who was established at Philadelphia, under the firm of Ouvrard, De Chailles and Co. The brother was very well received, taken by the Royal Treasurer to his own residence, and thence admitted into the Treasury itself, where, owing to the interruption of trade with the mother country, occasioned by the war, some seventy-one millions of dollars were accumulated. Thereupon, the treasurer pointed out to him a number of marked chests containing four millions of piastres which had been put apart as a separate deposit for the liquidation of the six bills of exchange in Ouvrard's hands.

A written acknowledgment of this deposit from the treasurer was, several years later, of great assistance in the transactions that afterwards took place between Ouvrard and the house of Hope and Co.

The fearful rise in the price of bread that occurred at Paris, in the year 1802, had compelled the First Consul to assemble the eight leading bankers of the capital: Perregaux, Récamier, Fulchiron and others, to consult with in regard to the measures that were to be adopted for public relief. However, these gentlemen



did not feel sufficient confidence, and they would not make any orders for foreign breadstuffs without the ready cash in hand. Much annoyed at his ill success in this affair, Napoleon summoned Ouvrard to him at Malmaison, whither the latter at once repaired, accompanied by Vanlerberghe, the usual participant in his enterprises, and finally offered, for the simple commission of 2 per cent., to undertake a contract to supply all the wheat required by the capital, and ship it to Havre. The sums expended, which had to be repaid progressively, accordingly as the bills drawn in England, Holland and Hamburgh, for the necessary purchases, fell due, ran up to the total of twenty-six millions of francs. On the presentation of the very first bill, the Minister of the Public Treasury, Barbé Marbois, declared that he had no money, and it was only after the lapse of eighteen months, and when an understanding had been come to for striking off the whole commission, amounting to half a million by itself, that the two operators succeeded, after the greatest trouble, in getting back the capital they had advanced. Notwithstanding this want of good faith and punctuality, Bonaparte did not hesitate to ask Ouvrard to take in hand, under certain conditions, the immensely increased necessities of his naval service, occasioned by the projected descent upon England. Ouvrard, whom experience had, indeed, made wiser, but who, as he himself states, did not dare to say, no ! lest he should increase the difficulties attending a reimbursement of the large claims in arrear he already had on the government, gave his consent, in June, 1803, for the term of *six years and three months* ! The contractors were, as early as the spring of 1804, in an unsecured advance of no less a sum than 68,845,000 francs.

The extraordinary and increasing necessities of the different ministries which kept pace with Napoleon's gigantic plans, and which Ouvrard had pledged himself to supply, and the nearly absolute impossibility of procuring the enormous sums they required, without great sacrifice, owing to the then existing condition of public credit in France, often subtracted on the one side far more than they could hope to gain upon the other. They, just at this very time, occasioned Ouvrard and his partner Vanlerberghe, large losses, and the unheard of cash payment of

43,000,296 francs, which, had the government possessed the means of discharging its obligations to its contractors punctually and regularly, they would have been certain to escape. Napoleon, who never had a correct idea of what credit means, and never considered it worth while to make any regulations applicable to it, but looked upon bankers, merchants, and, most especially, public purveyors, as so many birds of prey, found it convenient, by squeezing the mercantile classes, to take from them what they fancied they had rightfully earned, and yet openly applauded and professed the principle that war should pay itself, and be supported at the expense of the enemy. He would not tolerate nor listen to any intimation that in this way public welfare would be undermined, but without even enriching the State. From his character, and from the sway he yielded to his passions, it may be readily conceived that this system had become to him a second nature. Yet, to any one who has never experienced the charm that accompanies a vast, extended commerce, reacting far beyond the usual limits, or learned, from experience, how its unforeseen consequences often render it impossible to recede from it, at will, the wonderful organization of a man like Ouvrard must remain incomprehensible, plunging continually deeper and deeper as he did into the whirlpool of business, notwithstanding his correct estimate of the tendencies and prejudices that ruled Napoleon, and notwithstanding the constantly recurring instances of his want of good faith. Ouvrard could not have extricated himself from the vortex into which he had plunged, even had he wished to do so. This is evident, from the whole history of his life and actions. "It was ever a clamorous necessity that drove me into these affairs," he says: but the key to this linked labyrinth of necessities lay, usually, in the monstrous proportions of the first undertaking, which was far beyond even his strength.

In the Ministry of Public Finance it seemed to have been adopted, as a rule, always to connect, with partial payments of old debts, a series of new demands; and Barbé-Marbois, the head of that department, finally got so far, that he prevailed upon Ouvrard to assume a fresh contract, to supply all the requirements and wants of the Treasury for the year 1804 (An XIII), an

amount likely to reach the sum of 400,000,000 francs. The inducement held out to Ouvrard consisted in granting him the license of using the bare receipts given him, on the two Ministries of War and the Marine for advances made, as cash payments on account of the new advances; so that, definitively, the State remained his sole debtor for all the enormous advances he had directly or indirectly made.

Spain had, in a treaty of alliance with France, made herself available for a yearly subsidy of 72,000,000 francs, of which 32,000,000 had already fallen due, without one single franc having been accessible, through either the mediation of the Spanish banker Hervás, or the French Ambassador at Madrid. Ouvrard was, once more, the man on whom Napoleon laid his hand to bring about the payment of this sum; and the Minister Barbé-Marbois was willing, so far as the Treasury was concerned, to hold Mr. Desprez, and, for the requirements of the Navy, Mr. Vanlerberghe responsible, in Ouvrard's place, whereby, as Ouvrard affirms, it was understood that the latter should be entirely released from all the obligations transferred to the shoulders of the other two contractors, but under the condition that he should again make an advance of the whole amount, viz., 32,000,000 due from Spain. In this way they thought Ouvrard could step forward as the personal creditor of the Spanish Crown, and other advantages might be gained from his agency on this occasion. At length Ouvrard went on to Madrid, after having made the desired advance; but upon his arrival in the Spanish capital found the public Treasury so empty, that it could not even raise the half million of francs needed to defray the expenses of the King's trip to his pleasure palaces. Ouvrard opened his mission by instantly furnishing that amount, the moment he heard of the pinched position of the Royal purse, and, with great skill brought to bear two methods of obtaining admission to the (at that time) all-powerful Prince of Peace (*Príncipe de la Paz*), and prepare a favorable reception for the proposals he had to make. One of these methods consisted in drawing a vivid picture of the effect of anger on a man of such indomitable will as Napoleon possessed; the other was in making adroit reference to the Kingdom



of Portugal, which, as every one knew, had a large portion of Godoy's most secret wishes. Ouvrard did not forget to assure him that he was among the very men of whom Napoleon liked to form kings. Both these means worked well ; so much so, indeed, that at length it seemed as if there would be something done in earnest. Don Miguel Cay. Soler, the Minister of Finance, declared, at an interview in the Prince's presence, that, with the best will in the world, the coffers of the Treasury did not contain a dollar ; with the additional remark that the most pressing thing now was to provide for the general dearth of food ; money was needed for that, and it had to be procured. Other things could be attended to afterwards. When Soler had retired the Prince, turning to Ouvrard, said, " Now, Sir, you have heard all—more I cannot tell you—give Don Miguel your advice, and I will support your claims with his Majesty. I feel greatly concerned not to see your mission fail. Come to see me every day." The most natural plan surely would now have been to raise a heavy loan to pay the subsidies due to France, besides providing for the future necessities of the Treasury, and remedying the scarcity of food as soon as possible. But the difficulties that lay in the way of these measures were of no common order. These were: first, to acquire the confidence of the foreign bankers, especially those of Holland, who were to furnish the funds, and could depend upon the security offered. The treasures which were lying at the command of the Spanish government in Mexico, Peru, and elsewhere, but which could not be reached, on account of the war then going on, were the only resources Spain had to extricate her from the embarrassments that surrounded her ; for all other fountains of relief had run completely dry. To make them available as security for repayment was the task now undertaken by Ouvrard, who, as a preliminary condition to his exertions, demanded, *firstly*, the exclusive monopoly of the commerce with the Spanish-American colonies ; *secondly*, the free exportation of all the gold and silver stored up there belonging to the government ; and, *thirdly*, full power to make loans even in America, under the guarantee of the Financial Bureaux existing in Spanish America, and their promises to reimburse. This latter condition, however, betrayed a very

imperfect knowledge of American affairs. At the moment when Ouvrard was making these propositions, he was continually pressed by the French Financial Minister, Barbé-Marbois, to send on to Paris, as soon as possible, the gold and silver he had received. The proverbial slowness and caution of the Spaniard did not belie itself in this instance, and the Prince of Peace, who had constantly fretted at the payment of the subsidies to France, finally hesitated to adopt the only means which Ouvrard had proposed. The latter found himself at length obliged to remind the Prince of the letter which the Emperor had written with his own hand to the King of Spain, the moment he was made aware of Godoy's former hesitation concerning the subsidies, and had sent to the Ambassador, Beurnonville, that he might transmit it to the king in person. The letter referred to contained threats, very direct hints at the intimate relations subsisting between the Royal Consort and Godoy, and a peremptory request to expel the latter from the country.

The Prince had managed to weather this storm, but it would not be advisable to expose himself to such danger a second time, as he was given to understand by Ouvrard, who breakfasted with him every day. A fresh letter for the minister, Barbé Marbois, teeming with renewed threats by the emperor, in consequence of the delay and hesitation at Madrid, took Ouvrard in haste once more to the Prince of Peace. There he suddenly found himself in the presence of Queen Caroline. Our skillful financier could not pass by so favorable an opportunity of expressing to her his apprehensions of the danger that menaced the position of her acknowledged favorite, and the immediate consequence was, that Ouvrard received an invitation to occupy apartments in Godoy's palace. When Madrid was made acquainted with this unusual mark of favor, all the barriers with which the haciendas and other authorities had surrounded themselves up to that time, were at once thrown down. Ancient prejudices and long familiar customs were laid aside, and the negotiations had in a few days reached a point to which they had not attained in months before. Ouvrard now hit upon immediate means of at once remedying that most distressing of all evils, scarcity of food, and on the 26th of No-

vember, 1804, concluded a contract, endorsed by the government, with the "Junta d'Anona" of Madrid, to supply two million centners of corn from the French ports, at 26 francs per centner. Then on the same day he signed agreements with the Ministries of War and the Marine to supply all they might require during several years, and finally gave his signature to a trade-contract, of which the world had hitherto seen no example. This was a contract for the establishment of a common and mutual commercial partnership, under the firm Ouvrard and Co., between him and Charles IV. king of Spain himself, for the whole duration of the war. The main conditions of this partnership were: Firstly, full power to import on partnership-account into all the harbors of Spanish America, every description of goods and products needed for colonial consumption, during the whole continuance of the war with Great Britain, and at the same time complete authority to export thence, duty free, all their productions, but more especially their gold and silver; secondly, the stipulation that all profits resulting from the transactions of this partnership, should be divided in equal halves between his Catholic Majesty and Mr. Ouvrard. Napoleon approved of Ouvrard's contract for the exportation of two million centners of corn from the French ports, under the condition that he should pay an export-duty of four francs per centner, or about eight million francs, which were handed over in cash at Paris. Ouvrard also received from the English government the passes requisite for the transportation of the grain for which he had contracted. His agreement with the "Junta d'Anona," the permission to export already received from Napoleon, and that of the English government to effect the transportation, were published by Ouvrard in all the Spanish newspapers, and produced a magical effect. Wheat fell to such an extent that the Spanish government offered Mr. Ouvrard a million of dollars as a reimbursement, if he would give up his contract; he, however, declined this offer, and contented himself with reducing it to the ships which had already sailed from the French ports. Directly after the conclusion of his commercial agreement with king Charles IV. of Spain, Ouvrard was placed in possession of five hundred royal licenses for the introduction, duty



free, of every description of goods into the colonies. These licenses, provided with the signature of Don Miguel Cayetano Soler, left the name of the ship and its captain, the amount of his tonnage, its flag and the nature of its cargo, in blank. Then, upon the 18th of December, 1804, Ouvrard received, in behalf of the proposed commercial partnership, 752 drafts, or *livranzas*, of the Madrid Chamber of Finance, and the Court Bankers, Garochi, Nephew and Co., for the sum of 52,500,000 piastres. Ouvrard now hastened back to Paris; revived in the management of his business-transactions with the Ministries of War, the Marine; and the Interior, that activity which had been wanting in them during his absence, and then repaired in April, 1805, to Amsterdam to explain his agreements and plans to Messrs. Hope and Co. I have often heard from Mr. Labouchère's own lips the confirmation of what Ouvrard related concerning his first interview with the two heads of the latter house, Mr. John Williams Hope and himself: namely, that as he unfolded before them his combinations, plans, and stupendous views, those two gentlemen gave each other a mutual look of amazement, and might have even betrayed a serious doubt whether he was in the full possession of his understanding. So they asked for a couple of days that they might think his propositions over. When the circumspect Labouchère, who had not been able to form any very clear idea either of Ouvrard's capital, or of his circumstances and present available means from that gentleman's own statements, regarding his connections with the French and Spanish governments, and their War and Marine Departments, nor exactly to unravel the tangled thread of his surprising narratives which made light of millions upon millions, declared to him that the basis of an arrangement with the house of Hope and Co. could be nothing less than an unlimited confidence in himself, and that if their participation in his business was worth any thing to him, he must bind himself to them on all sides, and surrender himself completely to their discretion, refrain from all interference in the manner and way they might see fit to adopt in carrying out his plan, agree to them before hand, acknowledge the correctness of their accounts before hand, and with this intent place twelve blank letters with his signature in their posses-

sion. How they intended to operate, was communicated to him only in outline, and he was given to understand that, for the present, they would confine themselves to the practical part already within reach, to the royal bills of exchange on Mexico, Havana, &c., and to the use of the licenses accordingly as they had to be handed in. Ouvrard consented to every thing, and so, on May 6th, 1805, a very simple agreement was concluded between their house and him. Messrs. Hope and Co. bound themselves to assume the use of the licenses on his account, and for a stipulated commission of 5 per cent. upon all transactions arising from the same, bearing the cost of agencies themselves, and then to pay over to Ouvrard or his properly authorized representative, the net results of the same as soon as they themselves should have received them. They likewise engaged to make good the equivalent of all the bills drawn on them with 3 francs 75 centimes on the piastre, as soon as they should be handed in and have left the ports of the Spanish colonies, duty free. Hereupon, Ouvrard relinquished into the keeping of Messrs. Hope and Co., who were, moreover, commissioned to negotiate a loan for the Spanish crown, the greater part of the documents and bills remaining in his hands, and returned to Paris and Madrid. There I shall leave him, and refer to his embarrassments and fate, only when the development of my own history leads me naturally back to him, and the duty thence arising of clearing up his memory, may require it. For he was, incontestably, the man who first made the elements of credit distinctly visible to his nation, and greatly served the latter by even his wildest operations, at a time when the interior household-management of a state was scarcely understood, much less seriously laid hold of, by Napoleon. The acts of injustice done to him by Napoleon, and pursued with a degree of obstinacy, were of the most crying kind; but they have been unfortunately palliated in a truly frivolous manner, in the 20th chapter, 6th volume of Thiers' History of the Consulate and Empire; although the historian who, by the way, was scarcely out of bibs and tuckers at the time when they occurred, has tried hard to show that he has drawn his narrative from authentic sources. These sources

were Napoleon's *ordered* compilations of events under his dominion!

In the business undertaken by the Messrs. Hope, the London house of Baring Brothers and Co. took part; yet this fact was kept secret, on account of the state of relations existing during the war. I, at that time, had no knowledge of the circumstance, and only heard it upon my first return from America, when Mr. Henry Hope communicated it to me.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MEXICAN BUSINESS OF MESSRS. HOPE & CO.

The basis of the plan laid down in Amsterdam, and its execution in the United States—David Parish of Antwerp intrusted with the chief control of this business, and Mr. A. P. Lestapsis, from Hope's counting-house, and I, charged with the two most important branches of the money management; the former in Vera Cruz, and myself in New Orleans—My departure from Amsterdam for New York—Breaking out of the yellow fever there—Excursion to Boston—Arrival of the exiled General Moreau in New York—Arrival of David Parish in New York—Final consultations there—My arrival at New Orleans, on the first Easter Sunday, 1806—Sketch of the state of things in that city—Governor Claiborne—The land speculator John McDonough—The lawyer Edward Livingston—My first appearance in New Orleans, as a business man—The yellow fever, which had spared me in New York, seizes me here—The Conspiracy of the former Vice President of the United States, Aaron Burr—General Wilkinson—The rencontre of the American frigate Chesapeake with the British man-of-war Leopard, in the year 1807—Its influence upon my business relations—General expectation of war with England.

Two different methods were devised to lift the immense hoardings of silver on deposit in Mexico, and transport it thence. One of these was to procure from the British government, notwithstanding the war with Spain, permission to transport the silver piastres from Vera Cruz to England. At that time great scarcity of coin prevailed in England, especially of silver change, and in this respect the British East India Company was much inconvenienced, as it required large supplies to pay its hands and keep its various establishments throughout India agoing. The first attempt to obtain such permission failed. Pitt, the British Prime Minister, refused it, because it was evidently contributing to

strengthen the enemy's hands, and open sources of aid and comfort which the war had closed against him. But the wisdom and correct feeling of the statesman soon were re-awakened in him, when he perceived and weighed the advantages this supply of silver, once in the hands of the East India Company and the London Exchange, would yield to British trade. To heighten the prosperity of British commerce was to increase the general welfare. Napoleon openly expressed very different opinions; for, when a deputation of commercial men came out from Antwerp to welcome him on his approach to that city, he met them with the words: "I don't like merchants! A merchant is a man who would sell his country for a shilling!" *Je n'aime pas les negociants? Un negociant est un homme qui vendrait sa patrie pour un petit écu!* He despised the walks of trade, and in one of his consultations with Ouvrard, uttered the reproach that he had degraded royalty to the level of trade. "*Vous avez abaissé la royauté au niveau du commerce!*"

In short, Pitt finally gave his consent to dispatch four frigates, who, in the very midst of the war with Spain, very quietly appeared, one after the other, in the roads of Vera Cruz, and without any interruption took on board about fourteen millions of piastres from the treasury of Mexico, and brought the treasure back to England. Yet, fourteen millions were not more than one quarter of the whole amount which it was desirable to transfer from Mexico to Europe. By far the greater part was not to be transmitted in hard cash, but through the natural channels of trade, by dispatching consignments of goods from America, especially from the United States, to the ports of Europe. The United States, which were at that time wholly in possession of the carrying trade, presented the most extensive field for the purchase of all kinds of colonial produce—not merely their own, such as cotton and tobacco, but also of each and every other kind, such as coffee, sugar, pepper, &c., &c.—since the latter were regularly shipped thither, without the least difficulty, on American account, and under the protection of their neutral flag. But the war between England and the Continent, which obeyed the orders of Napoleon, as well as the watchfulness of the English

fleets and cruisers, made the transport of such purchases, for the account of even the Messrs. Hope, almost impossible. Measures had therefore to be taken to give them the character of neutral property, not in appearance merely, but in reality; and this could be done only by stimulating the enterprising spirit of the American merchants to send shipments on their own account into Continental Europe, taking out their insurance in England, making advances, and for their amount accepting bills on the drawer, which the Messrs. Hope themselves looked about for and indorsed, as being of a kind that had their full and entire confidence. In this manner the home-returning capital accumulated interest and increased, even through the enormously heavy commissions which remained to be raised on these consignments. The whole combination was a most excellent one, but could be easily and naturally carried into execution only in such a country as the United States, where the enterprising spirit knows no bounds, but where the capital of the venturer is limited.

Two great difficulties still lay in the way of an entire realization of the whole plan. The first and most important of these was to effect the realization of the values payable in coin in Mexico, and their transport to the United States. The moneys would have to be exported under the American flag and on American account. But such immense capitals as these could only be made neutral by paying a heavy commission, and respectable houses would in no case have lent themselves to it. People had not yet forgotten that a single house in the North of Europe had, at the beginning of the English and French war, covered such a multitude of ships and cargoes and made them neutral, that the English cruisers, put on their guard by the frequent re-appearance of the same names in the consignment papers and bills of lading, availed themselves of this suspicious circumstance, to call them up and obtain their condemnation as good and lawful prizes. The latter was pronounced because it seemed impossible that any one house could cover the seas with such a huge amount of capital as was here seen afloat at one time. The means of overcoming the first difficulty was to be looked for in the United States themselves. From this arose the second, namely, the selection of a



man who should unite sufficient mercantile experience with large intelligence and knowledge of men ; and moreover, should possess the capacity for making combinations, so as to devise ways and means of successful exit where they would, otherwise, remain hidden from the eyes of the common observer. The Barings wished to give the management of this business over to the hands of Mr. Samuel P. Labouchère, already named, who was then conducting the French correspondence of their house ; but his elder brother, who, as head of the Hope establishment, had concluded the contract with Ouvrard, pointed out David Parish (who, after the peace of Amiens, had founded a mercantile concern at Antwerp), as the man who, all the circumstances considered, would be the most suitable—Mr. Samuel P. Labouchère not appearing to be a person thoroughly fitted for the post. Mr. P. C. Labouchère had got to know the man of whom I speak—the third son of a John Parish, a Scotch merchant established at Hamburgh, shortly after the opening of his Antwerp house in Paris, and had very quickly discovered his keenness of perception, his skill, and his remarkable, nay, almost instinctive knowledge of human nature. Besides possessing all these valuable qualities, he was a pleasant companion without being a very well read man, had agreeable manners, and was a most excellent whist-player. It was generally hinted, although I could never positively verify the story, nor even credit it, that he was indebted to his large winning at play in Hamburgh for a considerable portion of the capital with which he had commenced his establishment. One thing, however, is quite certain, and Mr. Labouchère was well acquainted with the fact, that within a very short time after opening his concern, Parish had managed to more than treble the amount invested, and this in a very simple way. During his sojourn in Hamburgh, and before his trip to the United States, the Archbishop Talleyrand had been very kindly received and entertained by the Parish family, and had even been provided with funds by them. When Napoleon visited Belgium for the first time, and stopped for some days in Antwerp, Mr. David Parish entertained Prince Talleyrand in his magnificently furnished dwelling ; and this renewed acquaintance with a son of the family who had received him with

such kindness on a former occasion, led to an intimacy which, under the agreeable influences of the best table in Antwerp, and frequent matches at cards for high stakes—two things the Prince especially liked, and could appreciate as perfectly as his host himself—became daily stronger, and finally produced a confidential interchange of sentiment. The Prince, as everybody knows, was not at all regardless of the advantages opened to him by his position. We all have heard to what excellent account he turned the first intelligence of the victory at Marengo, and thereby enriched himself. A no less certain opportunity to make another similar speculation was now thrown in his way. Talleyrand, as Napoleon's Minister of Foreign Affairs, possessed the key of what passed in the emperor's mind concerning political and international matters, and was well aware that the speedy outbreak of a war with Great Britain was inevitable. The certain rise of prices for every species of colonial produce, in such a case, was evident. The Prince, ere he left Antwerp, came to an understanding with his young friend, and the latter made use of the hint he got, to employ all the capital and credit he could command in large purchases of colonial goods at Antwerp and elsewhere. Soon after Napoleon's return to Paris, the memorable scene in the Tuilleries with Lord Whitworth occurred; and a declaration of war and an important rise in the price of all colonial products followed. The first very striking result had given Mr. David Parish considerable weight in the eyes of Mr. Labouchère; and the fact of his having, young as he was, managed to ingratiate himself into the confidence of such a man as Talleyrand, was regarded as a proof of undeniable merit, and his capacity for the management of the greatest interests. Of course it was not difficult for Mr. Labouchère to prevail upon Parish to intrust the interests of his Antwerp house entirely in the hands of his partner, G. Agie, and accept the agency of his projected business in America. The business itself held out great inducements, and the conditions under which the agency was arranged were no less favorable. These conditions were: Firstly, that Mr. David Parish should enjoy one full fourth of the business advantages and profits arising from these transactions; secondly, that Parish was not to under-

take any separate business that did not go to the common account of both the partners interested, namely, Hope & Co., and David Parish; thirdly, all the travelling and other necessary expenses were to be charged.

Two head agents were still necessary: one for Mexico, to present the bills of exchange and get them cashed, to ship the coin at Vera Cruz, and oversee the sale of the ships' cargoes coming in under license; the other at New Orleans, to receive the coin as it arrived, to dispatch the cargoes of German, English and French manufactured goods coming in from Europe to Vera Cruz under accompanying licenses, and to make over to the merchants in the latter city as many licenses as the opportunity would admit. For my own part, there was no necessity for any longer delay in Europe during the financial preparation of the instructions which Mr. Parish was to bring over to me. I consequently embarked during the first days of July, 1805, in the American ship *Flora*, commanded by Captain Daniel Sterling, for New York. I arrived after a voyage of 42 days, which was looked upon at that time as a very rapid one. The astonished consignee of the ship, who had not even heard of its arrival in Amsterdam, was standing on the quay to welcome me, its only passenger, and his friend the captain. The world into which I found myself now transported, was entirely new to me. I had, owing to the at that time extreme rarity of authentic works concerning the United States, read so little about them, that I had possessed a very imperfect idea about the country, and had conceived it to be, in consequence of the thoroughly savage condition in which the land had been discovered and gradually peopled, much further behindhand in civilization than I found it.

I distinctly remember a circumstance which will give my readers an excellent conception of the singular ideas I entertained in regard to the state of things in America, as compared with the notions of our captain concerning the perfection of his native country. It simply happened one day that an excellent umbrella was broken on deck during a violent storm, and I asked the captain, if he thought I could replace it with as good a one in New York; when he replied quite sharply: "God bless me! ask me



whether the sun shines in New York." It must be remembered that this occurred forty-seven years ago, and at that time in Germany, America was generally looked upon as a sort of penal colony or rendezvous for all kinds of scamps and worthless fellows. When I first informed my parents that I was going thither, my mother at once exclaimed: "It cannot be possible that you have taken into your head this unfortunate idea of going to America? Who knows what advantage they may take of your inexperience!"

A few days after my arrival in New York, the yellow fever broke out in that city. When I was about starting from Amsterdam, Mr. Labouchère had asked me if I was afraid of the yellow fever; "for"—he added—"if you do feel afraid of it, you must not go to America, as you will be certain to die there!" I had said that I felt no apprehension, and as I really did not feel at all timid about it, I was determined to push boldly on for New York. But the houses to which I was recommended gave me to understand that, as business was generally very quiet in the months of July, August and September, and the city was deserted by every one who could get away, it would be imprudent for me to stay there. I followed their advice and went to Boston; but after a six weeks' sojourn there and in Philadelphia, returned to New York. A few days after my arrival in the latter city, a rumor was circulated that a ship from Cadiz had entered the bay with the exiled General Moreau on board. It was not long before all the militia drums were heard in every part of the city, and their commander-in-chief, a lawyer by the name of Morton, went galloping about in all directions, on horseback, in the uniform of a general, followed by his adjutants, principally young law-students, as if he imagined that Moreau had also begun his career in the legal profession. At any rate, he dashed about, commanding and countermanding, and urging the greatest haste in the preparations every body was making for a grand display in the long main street of the city, called Broadway, which extends to the public promenade designated as the Battery. It was at the latter point that the distinguished stranger was to land. His debarkation took place about an hour later. The general, clad in citizen's style, with a blue coat and pantaloons, mounted a horse prepared for him, amid

music and the acclamations of the crowd, and rode up, surrounded by his staff of parti-colored militia, along the main street to the City Hall. Each separate company of each and every battalion, wore their own peculiar and frequently extremely singular uniform, and it was impossible to look at the *ensemble* of this military assemblage in any other light than as a harlequin parade; but the officers of this remarkable body were in no slight degree proud of it, and when General Moreau had reached the City Hall, he was very gravely asked by General Morton what he really thought of the American troops? The general is said to have replied that he had never seen *such* soldiers in the whole course of his life! which somewhat ambiguous compliment was several times repeated to me, at the same time with the greatest seriousness, as something highly honorable to the American military.\*

Some American amateurs had got up a great concert on the same evening in the long saloon of the "City Hotel," at that time the largest public house in the place. General Moreau was invited to be present, and promised to comply. The street-corners were at once covered with large hand-bills, announcing in immense capitals that he would attend the concert. I could not deny myself the pleasure of getting a near view of this distinguished man, and so went to the musical entertainment. There was a great crowd present, but the most striking personage in the throng was by no means General Moreau, of whom every body remarked that he did not look at all like a French general, because he simply wore a blue coat; but General Morton in his Washington uniform, with a blue coat and yellow facings, &c. The latter introduced to the general every one who wanted to take a good stare at him, and the shaking of hands with ladies and gentlemen went on as if it never would end. At length I managed to force my way close up to these two great leaders, Morton the lawyer and militia hero, and the hero of Hohenlinden. Just as I got there, a quaker

\* When Marshal Bertrand was, some years ago, visiting the north-western portion of the United States, and had arrived at Buffalo, in the State of New York, a review of the citizen militia was held there in his honor; and the newspapers, on that occasion, revived the old anecdote of thirty years before, and put in his mouth the words I have just attributed to Moreau.

had himself introduced to the latter, and shaking him heartily by the hand, uttered the following words: "Glad to see you safe in America!—Pray, General—say, do you remember what was the price of cochineal when you left Cadiz?" The victor of Hohenlinden shrugged his shoulders and was unable to reply.

Some days after this military festival, my friend Lestapis arrived from Amsterdam with a portion of the documents required to carry on our business. We passed our time for several weeks very pleasantly. The well-known hospitality shown to every stranger, possessing the least cultivation, who arrives in the United States, made it easy for us to enjoy ourselves. At length, in the beginning of November, David Parish arrived. The news of some very large commercial enterprise had already preceded him, and, although the nature of the undertaking had not become known, the greatest curiosity followed every step he took. In New York, the whole combination of the enterprise which had been fully discussed at Amsterdam, was unfolded and analyzed, and my friend Lestapis and myself set out, each for his post; he to Vera Cruz and I to New Orleans, where a whole cargo of German linens had arrived, and was awaiting me. The fast-sailing schooner *Aspasia* had brought it to its destination. I went overland to Charleston, and as (contrary to all expectation) there was no suitable craft there on which I could take passage for New Orleans, I purchased the schooner *Regulator*, and went in it to the latter port.

It was on Easter Sunday, 1806, that I first set foot on the soil of Louisiana, where I, five years later, was invested with the rights of citizenship, and I reached the city of New Orleans before nightfall.

Louisiana, originally a French colony, then Spanish, and then again French, had, as every one knows, been sold, shortly before the time of which I speak, to the United States by the French government, for fifteen millions of Spanish dollars, and had been soon afterwards organized as a territory. It possessed an elective legislature, chosen by the people, but the Governor received his appointment from the President of the Confederation, which high post was at that moment occupied by Thomas Jefferson. The



political rival of this celebrated man, in the struggle for the Presidency, had been Aaron Burr, and it was said that the vote of a representative from Kentucky, named William Cole Claiborne, had turned the scale at the election, and secured Jefferson's success. Such a service as this had been rewarded by the President elect with no less a mark of favor than Claiborne's appointment to the governorship of Louisiana. To make way for him, the French prefect, Laussat, a man of education and refinement, possessing all the manners of a French courtier, was removed. Claiborne was exactly the reverse; of fine personal appearance, but, in all other respects, a coarse, rude man, and, at the same time, very sharp and *knowing*, as most Americans are. The greater part of the then existing population was of French origin. In the city itself the French number at least three-fifths of the inhabitants; one other fifth was of Spanish race, and another Americans, among whom were some Germans. The city numbered about 16,000 souls, of whom one-third were people of color and slaves. The mercantile class was made up of four or five French establishments, springing from the neighborhood of the Garonne, and founded during the continuance of the French rule; three Scotch counting-houses, one German concern, and eight or ten commission-houses, lately opened by young American merchants from New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. The traces of this class, who carried on the early business of New Orleans under the new regime, are now limited to the sugar-planter Shepherd, who is still living, and now very wealthy, and to the still more opulent Mr. W. M. Montgomery, formerly wholesale grocer, and now the owner of a large portion of the northwestern section of the State, who lives partly at New York and partly at Paris. Shepherd, whom I have just named, who was but two-and-twenty when he came from Baltimore to New Orleans, was accompanied thither by a young American from the same place, who could not have been more than a few years older than himself. The latter brought some six or eight thousand dollars with him, and after, for a considerable time, exploring all sorts of uncultivated lands lying along the Mississippi, made a choice and purchased. This young man was John McDonough, who made such constant parade

of the lands he had bought, so well understood the game of making fictitious sales to his friend Shepherd, at very high rates, and through him to others at still higher prices, and pursued this system, observing, at the same time, great frugality at home, so long and so skilfully, that at length real purchasers fell into his net, and made themselves part and parcel of it. McDonough talked very little, and seldom mixed in general conversation, especially with ladies, whose society he avoided as much as possible. When he did open his lips, all that fell from them was praise of certain lands he had just purchased, and this theme was inexhaustible. It was not in Louisiana alone that he carried on this system, but also in neighboring States, and he continued it for more than forty years. He passed his spare time in looking after the education of some children in the neighborhood of his homely residence on an estate, or, as they call it in the South, a *plantation*, belonging to him. He also occupied himself with the amateur study of medicine. McDonough died in October, 1851, and, upon the opening of his will, it was discovered, that at the time of his death he owned four-fifths of all the uncultivated lands in the State of Louisiana, and many tracts of territory in other States, to the very considerable amount of fifteen millions of dollars. During the lapse of some thirty-four years I saw him very frequently, the last time in 1839, and knew but one relation of his, a brother who was a pilot, and died early, if I am not mistaken, of the yellow fever. McDonough himself died without heirs, either direct or collateral, and has made over his whole property to the government of the United States, that it shall expend the same in the establishment of public schools. Beside this general direction, there are a number of small bequests and codicils of very curious nature appended to his will. One of the oddest of these is the bequest made to Leon Gozlan, in Paris. This well-known writer some years ago published a romance called the "*Medecin du Pecq*," which, in every point of view, but especially by some very peculiar and profound psychological studies, attracted the greatest notice throughout France. The editor of the "*Courrier des Etats Unis*" republished it in the feuilleton of that widely circulated paper, and it thus fell into the hands of Mr. McDonough, who

read it at home in his solitary hours, and was so charmed with some of the author's observations on the world and men, that he made him his heir to the amount of ten thousand dollars. This sum was lately handed over to Mr. Gozlan by Mr. Rives, the late American Ambassador at Paris, in a check on the house of Albrecht & Co., in Havre.

I now return from this episode to the many-colored scenes of my own changeful life. What notions were entertained, in the northern part of the Union, of such a community as made up the population of New Orleans, is clearly conveyed by an anecdote of my friend, Mr. M. Amory, of Boston, whose newly-established house, under the firm of *Amory & Callender*, had received the cargo of Schleswig linens sent from Europe, and then held it in charge for me. Just as he was on the point of starting from Boston for New Orleans he had seen in the newspapers an advertisement of a ship about to sail direct to the latter port, and then looking for passengers and freight. Amory called upon the owner to recommend to him his young house as consignee. The owner told him in confidence that he had not at all intended to send his ship to New Orleans, but that he had published the advertisement only for the purpose of discovering among the passengers who would apply for berths, a rascal who had swindled his brother of a considerable sum of money. "For," added the owner, "I consider it probable that he will try to leave for New Orleans, which, as everybody knows, is a regular rendezvous for all sorts of rogues and rabble."

Among these people, thus generally looked upon as the offscourings of the northern States, I found a man of remarkable intellectual powers and real talent. This man was the celebrated Edward Livingston, originally from the State of New York. He had been a lawyer in the city of New York, and had there, as a member of the Municipal Council, performed the functions of Recorder. In that respect he had played a highly important part, and had once represented the State itself in the Senate at Washington. At length there was suddenly discovered, in the management of the municipal income of the city, then in the hands of the Recorder, an inexplicable deficit of \$60,000. Under these cir-



cumstances, it was impossible for Livingston to remain any longer in the place.\* He then emigrated to New Orleans, and there began his career anew with the most remarkable success. He there married the young and fascinating widow of a legitimist and legist by the name of Moreau, from St. Domingo. The lady's maiden name had been Davezac, and, after the destruction of the colony, she had fled with her mother, sister, and one brother, first to Jamaica, and then to Louisiana. I shall hereafter find further occasion to speak of Livingston's brother-in-law, Auguste Davezac. He was the same person who, some years after, was appointed, by President Jackson, to the post of American Ambassador, and was from there summoned to Naples to draw the indemnity moneys, but was soon afterward obliged to give up his place at the Hague, on account of what we will call—to use a mild term—irregularities in the arrangement of his accounts.\* Davezac was of French origin, but had attained great readiness in the English language, and was employed at the time of my own arrival as a sworn interpreter in the Courts, and he was afterwards in the Legislative Assembly of Louisiana. He had at length become Livingston's factotum, and had made himself almost indispensable to that gentleman, in hunting up the evidence among the family papers of the French planters, and in procuring witnesses who were ready at all times to swear to anything that might be required of them. I recollect particularly a remarkable criminal suit against a certain Beleurgey, the editor of one of the first American papers, "Le Telegraphe" by name, which was published at New Orleans, in the French and English languages, during 1806-'07. The accused had forged the signature of a wealthy planter for the purpose of raising money, and when he was detected had confessed his guilt to the planter in writing, and urgently besought him not to appear as prosecutor. The planter felt disposed to accede to this request, but the letter was already in the hands of justice. How, then, did Livingston manage, as the attorney and advocate of Beleurgey, to secure the discharge of the accused, notwithstanding this confession, this damning evidence of his guilt? Davezac got together witnesses, who swore before the Court, that they had long known Beleurgey to be the greatest

\* See Appendix.

of liars, from whose lips there never fell a word of truth. "Look at this!" said Livingston to his French jury; "the man could not tell the truth; the very acknowledgment of his guilt is a lie, for only a fool would be his own accuser. So then Beleurgey has either lied, or he has not the control of his own understanding, and in either case has not been conscious of what he was doing, and cannot be found guilty!" So the jury brought in a verdict by which he was discharged!

When I first arrived in New Orleans, there was not a single house there possessed of any capital worth mentioning, and an honorable character seemed to me quite as great a rarity. I believed just as much as I pleased of the representations made by the merchants just established there; and with all their boasting, and great parade of clearness, it was quite remarkable that my experience was not enriched at the beginning, by the knowledge of some unhandsome trick in trade, like those with which every other man seemed to have been proud of having duped his neighbor. The individual who succeeds, with a certain degree of skill, in accomplishing some sharp manoeuvre, is too often rewarded in the United States with the epithet of clever fellow.

In Messrs. Amory & Callender I discovered unswerving integrity, combined with a certain distrust of all undertakings which involved the least risk; and it was precisely in consequence of these two qualities, which are rather rare in American business circles, that I made up my mind to employ their house in the execution of my plans. I had not yet passed a fortnight in New Orleans, and had given no one occasion to conjecture what my object was in coming to the place, when the news was all at once buzzed about that a schooner, under the American flag, six days from Vera Cruz, had arrived in the Mississippi, with 150,000 Spanish dollars on board for Vincent Nolte.

"Hullo! who can that be?" every one began to ask; "What, that young man?" They had, however, scarcely ceased to express their wonder, when another schooner from Vera Cruz came in with \$200,000 on board, and finally, ten days later, a third one appeared, which, like the first, brought \$150,000, and all for the same young man! The French planters had already treated me

with some distinction, merely from the fact that I was a stranger. I spoke French, but now, *motif de plus!* their preference knew no bounds. Not a ball or soirée took place at their houses to which I was not invited.

I had already passed more than three months in the city, when, in the beginning of August, I was seized with a terrible attack of yellow fever. A burning headache, as if my brain was on fire, and violent pains in the back, were the first symptoms. The acquaintances by whom I was surrounded, and among them a Spaniard, by the name of Seré, who had become extremely interesting to me through his connection with Vera Cruz, at once called in their favorite physician, a Frenchman by the name of Raoul; and this man, who, in all other respects but intimate knowledge of yellow fever, was a perfect quack, succeeded in saving my life; with the very correct idea that the yellow fever is nothing but a violent inflammation of the gall, he instantly gave me a powerful emetic. Then, on the second day, another one, and on the third a strong purgative. My consciousness gradually returned, and at length I was out of danger, although desperately weakened and unnerved. In the forenoon of the third day the Cashier of the Louisiana Bank, a very honorable man, by the name of Zacharie, came to me, and asked me, with great earnestness, if I had made my will. I replied, "No, why?" "Now," he responded, "I need not tell you that you have the yellow fever, and it is more than probable that you will die to-morrow." I raised my head to listen. "For the fourth day is the critical one, through which the patient seldom survives. You have treasure; large sums lying in the bank to an amount never yet seen here; and were you to die, this capital would fall into extremely unsafe hands. The administrators of the property of foreigners dying here intestate, appointed by the State, are people who not only merit no confidence, but, to tell you the honest truth, are a set of shameless rascals." My reply was that I did not at all feel like dying, and that I would not die. I concluded with the words, "As I am not going to leave the world yet awhile, I don't want to bother my head with making a will." Mr. Zacharie gave me a searching look, and then said, "Well, indeed, my dear Mr. Nolte,



with the disposition that you manifest, I do feel quite sure that you are not going to die."

In the autumn of 1806 there circulated, throughout the United States, all kinds of rumors concerning an intended or already organized conspiracy, whose object was to separate the Southern from the Northern States, and to organize a second American Republic. At the head of this conspiracy, and of this projected duplicate republic, stood the American general, Burr; the same who had been the rival candidate of Jefferson for the Presidency, and had killed Washington's celebrated Secretary, Alexander Hamilton, in a duel. This man of evil reputation, of whom, as was generally known, Jefferson was, personally, afraid, had secretly been travelling through the West, and had there won over many partisans. It was even said that General Wilkinson, the commander of the small military force then maintained by the United States, and a militia general, by the name of Adair, from the State of Kentucky, belonged to this conspiracy. In New Orleans, the local militia was organized by the direction of the United States Government, and put in a condition to bear arms. The Frenchmen residing in that city formed two companies, the Irish a third, and the Germans a fourth. The latter, without knowing much about me, appointed me their Captain, probably because they every day heard of my money deposits in the bank. Military capacity I did not possess, and my sub-officers, consisting of store-clerks, grocers and trades-apprentices, learned no more of the service than I had picked up the day before.

Suddenly there appeared in New Orleans, as commander of the garrison, the very general above referred to, who had fallen under suspicion. He at once mustered the local militia, and had them sworn in, so that he might exercise full authority over us all, as though we were regular troops of the line. He then had two young Americans, named Samuel Swartwout and P. V. Ogden, suddenly arrested, put on board a small government vessel, and sent to Washington as accomplices of Burr. A few days later General Adair, of Kentucky, arrived by way of the Mississippi, and he also was arrested and dispatched to the capital. At last I was privately informed that I was looked upon with great suspi-

cion by the commanding general, since he had ascertained that the house of Baring, at London, had placed itself in readiness to furnish the funds necessary to secure the success of Burr's conspiracy, and I was well known to be the agent of that firm. When I learned that Wilkinson had secretly sent for a sergeant and corporal from my company, and questioned them concerning me, it seemed perfectly plain to me that the general was playing with false cards, and I resolved, without further delay, to go right to him, and ask him what was running in his head about me. He received me with a certain degree of solemnity, took me to one side, raised his eyes to heaven, and talked a great deal about his responsibility, and his duties to God and the country, which required that he should exercise the greatest vigilance in all directions. Finally he showed me an intercepted letter, written by one of Burr's accomplices, in which the following words occurred: "B. has undertaken to supply all the funds needed to carry out the whole plan." He then asked me what I thought of that, and what I had to say. My reply was, briefly, to the purport, that he must look to better authority than myself to find out what was meant by those words, and that the letter B. most probably indicated his friend Burr: that I was no agent of the Barings, and that if he would do me the honor to examine them, my books were open for his inspection: above all, I wished to know whether he was satisfied with this voluntary declaration, and would leave me undisturbed. Hereupon he seized my hand with the same solemnity that had characterized his first reception of me, once more rolled up his eyes, and said, "You have above a friend and protector; you are an honorable man, Mr. Nolte; return to your home in peace." And thus the affair terminated. I had carefully watched the man, and had come to the conclusion that he was an impostor, and most likely deeply implicated himself in Burr's plot. The result has proven that my conjectures were correct. From the lawsuits that afterwards arose at Washington, out of the arbitrary arrest of General Adair, and Messrs. Swartwout and Ogden, it was made evident that he had promised his aid to Burr in the scheme, but had withdrawn from it in good season. In his defence he constantly made a great show of the pompous words,

“I have lopped off a limb to save the body of the Constitution!” and it was only Jefferson’s preference and protection that saved him from the consequences of his irregular behavior. He had, however, forfeited the good opinion of his countrymen, and at length went away to Mexico, where he died a few years afterwards.

I had yet another trial to encounter during the management of the interest intrusted to my care. This was the rencontre between the English man-of-war *Leopard* and the American frigate *Chesapeake*, off the entrance of the bay of the latter name, in the summer of 1807. The English commander had received very accurate and explicit information regarding the enlistment of several deserters from his vessel on board of the American frigate, and when the latter showed herself on the open sea, the *Leopard* bore right down to her, and summoned her captain to surrender the deserting sailors. This the American, very naturally, refused to do. The frigate was poorly manned, and, in all other respects, unfit for action. The first shots from the British vessel were only a few times answered, and then the *Chesapeake* struck her flag. Hereupon the English officers came on board, mustered the crew, selected their five deserters from the throng, and took them back to the *Leopard*. This occurrence aroused the most fearful excitement in the United States; every one spoke with the greatest bitterness in favor of immediate war with England. There was no lack of rash counsellors, who endeavored to persuade me that I ought at once to set out for England or the North with my silver deposits. But I was too well aware that, on the part of England, there could be no good and sufficient cause for war, and that, so far as the United States were concerned, war could only be declared by Congress, which would first have to be called together by the President, and thus several months *must* elapse before the country could be in a position to commence hostilities, even supposing—a case still doubtful—that Congress should deem it necessary and wise to adopt violent measures.



## CHAPTER V.

### DAVID PARISH IN PHILADELPHIA.

The measures adopted by him—A retrospective glance at Ouvrard and his affairs—Mismanagement the natural result of the unlimited obligations he had assumed—Complicated relations with the French State Bank, which thereby finds itself obliged to suspend specie payments—Napoleon's return after the peace of Presburg—Despotic measures, and his arbitrary interference with Ouvrard's business relations, by which the whole organization is brought to the ground—Napoleon and the house of Hope & Co. in Amsterdam, who, with becoming dignity, reject his propositions, and send his agent, afterwards the Baron Louis, home with a flea in his ear—The French Consul, General de Beaujour, in Philadelphia, is obliged to place himself in the hands of Parish, as Mollien, the Minister of Finance, is also compelled to throw himself into the arms of Hope & Co—False and one-sided judgment of Ouvrard by Thiers, who never did, or never would, comprehend Ouvrard's position as a merchant.

FROM the considerations given at the end of the last chapter, I remained where I was. A retrospective glance now carries me back to the central point of the important business, whose chief control was intrusted to the guidance of Mr. David Parish. The latter had selected Philadelphia for his head-quarters, as an intermediate point between New York and Baltimore; from which two points the cargoes of goods were to be sent out under licenses, and where the most considerable returns in Spanish dollars were to be received. After consultation with some of the first houses, particularly in Baltimore, where the best fast-sailing clippers are built, it was made evident that insurances upon such shipments were not to be thought of, since no less than twenty per cent. premium was required. In order to cover a capital of \$60,000, at such a premium, one would have to insure \$75,000;

so that in shipping and insuring four cargoes, each of the value of \$60,000, you would have to lay out a total of \$60,000 in premiums; and thus, even should those cargoes reach their destination in safety, you would have diminished your capital to the extent of the last-mentioned sum—that is to say, out of \$240,000 you would have only \$180,000 left. Hence it may be perceived, that our four uninsured cargoes, should one be cast away and lost, or be taken by belligerents, and the other three arrive in safety, it would amount to the same thing; and that as a loss of one in four would be a very rare one, even in time of war, in case fast sailing ships, under vigilant, active and skilful captains, to whom a reasonable recompense had been promised, should they bring their voyage to a successful issue, were used. We adopted the plan of building immediately and at the same time, six fast-sailing vessels, of equal value and equal tonnage, lading them with cargoes worth the same amount, and sending them, on the account of the parties assuming the risk, to Vera Cruz, under these Spanish licenses.

In this consisted the first measure to be adopted. The second consideration was, what premium, or what amount of profit was proportioned to the licenses, and introduction of the hitherto excluded goods into Mexico. The third was, who should bear the expense of building the ships and procuring their cargoes. With regard to these two points, it was deemed most advisable to make them both one interest; that is to say, to have the whole outlay for ships and cargoes provided for by one and the same house, and to require of that house one-third of its net profit as a premium for the use of the license. Should one cargo be lost or captured, of course there would be no premium to pay on the license.

It was the house of Messrs. Robert and John Oliver, two honorable Irish gentlemen, who had settled in Baltimore, and already possessed considerable capital there, who, jointly with their brother-in-law, James Craig, of Philadelphia, first undertook this enterprise. It was also stipulated, that should these vessels be used for the transportation of silver coin, not representing the results of the cargoes sent out, the shipper should be entitled to a

freight of five per cent. on the amount embarked. The whole combination was excellent; but before the house in Baltimore had concluded a definite contract with Mr. David Parish, there was yet another matter of anxiety to be decided; this was, to accurately know to what we would be bound on either side, in case that, notwithstanding the assured exemption of the cargoes from the generally heavy duties in Mexico, unexpected demands should suddenly be made upon us by that Government, and all at once lifted from the two or three cargoes which might then be lying in the port of Vera Cruz. The Messrs. Oliver desired the guaranty of Mr. David Parish against the consequences of such an eventuality.

It had been fully understood between Ouvrard and his partner, Charles IV., or rather the latter's Ministry, that there should be no duties to pay in Mexico. But the Messrs. Oliver, like prudent merchants, desired to have an accurate knowledge of the length and breadth of their obligations, and thus Mr. Parish had to devise some means of giving them this guaranty, before the scheme could be set in motion. He undertook it for a consideration of twenty per cent., which was to be deducted from the calculation made in Philadelphia, of the rough profits on the cargoes sold in Vera Cruz, and was then to be paid over or made good to Parish.

Soon after his arrival in the United States he had explained the nature of his mission to the oldest and best correspondents of the two firms of Hope & Baring; such men, namely, as Willing & Francis, in Philadelphia; Robert Gilmore & Sons, in Baltimore. James & Thomas H. Perkins, in Boston, and had expressed a desire for their participation in the business. Partly through his not understanding it, and partly because he had not the sufficient disposable means, he was unable to carry on so vast an undertaking alone. After the extraordinary success of Messrs. Oliver had been witnessed in Baltimore, for some eight or ten months. there was no longer any lack of parties, either, to take out the licenses; and Parish was thus placed in a situation to conclude similar arrangements with Isaac McKimm, James Tenant, and John O'Donnell, in Baltimore, and also to transfer a couple of



the licenses in the house of Archibald Gracie & Sons, in New York, who had less means than the others, but possessed excellent credit. The agent in Vera Cruz, my friend A. P. Lestapis, had started there under the name of Jose Gabriel de Villanueva. He had formerly served in the counting-house of Mr. Juan Planté, in Santander, and at the death of his colleague, a Spaniard, named Villanueva, who was of the same age, and resembled him both in face and figure, the latter's certificate of birth and other papers had fallen into his hands.

Mr. Labouchère, in Amsterdam, who thoroughly understood and feared the evil consequences, or at least great difficulties, that would attend the appearance of a Frenchman in Mexico, as a commercial agent, and thought that all these would be avoided by the employment of a Spaniard in the Spanish interest, and that by this means one might go on, and even empty the Mexican Treasury, without being disturbed, occasioned this change of name, and directed my friend's appearance under the borrowed title. The secret of this change was intrusted to only one person, a lady in Vera Cruz. Lestapis fell in love with an extremely charming young girl, a Miss Manuelita de Garay, and married her under the name of Villanueva, at the same time promising that he would repeat the ceremony, somewhere outside of Mexico, under the name of Lestapis. This promise was redeemed two years afterwards in Philadelphia.

Villanueva had intrusted two houses in Vera Cruz with the sale of the cargoes sent to him, three-fourths of them to the most respectable and wealthiest of these firms, Pedro Miguel de Echeverria, and the remaining fourth to the less considerable establishment of Francisco Luis de Septien, under an agreement to make good the half of the commission calculated thereupon at five per cent. The best guage, by which to estimate the whole profits of the cargoes sent to Vera Cruz, is afforded by the sum representing the half of this commission, which amounted to \$280,000. The whole of it ran up to the 560,000 piastres, and the net value of the imported cargoes was consequently \$11,200,000; as there was neither freightage nor duties, all that remained to be deducted from them was embraced in the commission, and some trifling local

expenses. In addition to the proceeds of the goods sold, the clippers, on their return from Vera Cruz, each time brought with them from \$100,000 to \$200,000, on account of the Bills of Exchange or *Libranzas* there presented, which, including the moneys received by me in New Orleans, amounted to about 15,000,000 Spanish dollars.

I must now return once more to Ouvrard, from whom the reader parted when he made his last journey to Madrid. One would have supposed that Ouvrard's appetite for colossal undertakings would have been gratified, by this time, to satiety. But such was by no means the case. Directly after his return to Madrid he received, through his friend and patron Godoy, a contract for ten years, by which the products of all the lead and quicksilver mines of Spain were transferred to him, at the average prices of the last ten years; and to this was added the privilege of supplying the government with all the tobacco it required.

In regular proportion to the successive and rapid arrivals of Spanish dollars in the ports of the United States, Ouvrard received their equivalent through the house of Hope & Co., in Amsterdam, at the stipulated rates, and this enabled him, not only to render the Spanish monarchy the service of making the immense resources it possessed beyond the seas available, but also to put it in a position to discharge with facility the yearly subsidy it owed to France. It does not require any extraordinary talent for calculation to perceive, that this likewise placed the keys of the Spanish Treasury in Napoleon's hands, and that he could retain them in his possession so long as he saw fit. He thus had indirect control of the means which his war with England, and the watchfulness of her fleets, had hitherto made inaccessible to him. This, as I have already remarked, is plain enough to the most limited intelligence, and the eyes of the French Minister in Madrid were at length opened to the fact by Ouvrard's representations. His reports had produced their effect upon the Minister Public of Finance, who had persuaded himself that Ouvrard was the most influential man in Spain; and the truth came flowing in from every reliable quarter so incontestably clear, that any misapprehension of it was almost impossible. And yet, can it be credited, that the greatest

intellect, the mightiest genius of the age, was guilty of precisely this misconception ! Yet so it happened. I have already alluded to his dislike of everything mercantile, or belonging to mercantile pursuits, or carried on in a mercantile way ; and this it was which, united to a blind personal hatred to Ouvrard and his altered policy in relation to Spain, sufficed to overthrow the most magnificent structure that ever the spirit of mercantile enterprise had begun to erect for the benefit of both kingdoms, and, at the same time, deprive the Emperor himself of the richest sources of Spanish opulence, by closing against him the influx of silver from New Spain.

There is but one thing that offers an excuse for Napoleon's mistake in this matter ; it consists in the confusion of French financial affairs at that time, the enormous requirements of his vast armies, and the unavoidable operations thence arising. He did, indeed, succeed for a while in raising the necessary sums from the taxation and unlimited contributions of the regions he conquered, and in living, to use the proper phrase, at the expense of others ; but in the long run these levies finally overstepped all bounds, produced a diseased condition of financial affairs, and at the same time revolted the countries subjected to them. Then, again, the colossal nature of Ouvrard's already undertaken and projected enterprises required a spirit of order, method, and extreme watchfulness, as well as a number of faithful and capable agents, &c., such as Ouvrard neither had at his command, nor could find in sufficient number. Accustomed to deal lightly with millions, he was, undoubtedly, often in a condition to make his calculations general, and to arrange means of carrying out his plans as a whole, which were by no means deficient in quick and ready efficiency : but the moment his schemes were about to become living realities, the gift of clearly comprehending the requisite measures to be taken, prudence in making the final step, and perseverance in conducting his efforts to a decisive issue, were lacking. Thus the door stood open to all kinds of mismanagement, embezzlement, and roguery, which did not tarry in making themselves apparent first by an unusual crisis of the Bank at Paris. The banker Duprez, who, it will be remembered, had taken Ouvrard's



place in his engagements with the public Treasury, and held the obligations of the public Receivers-General, which fell due periodically, had, through the circulars sent to them by the Minister of Finance, requested them to forward him all moneys at their disposition, for an interest equivalent of at least eight per cent. In this way vast capital flowed into his hands, of which, as currently reported, he lent, chiefly through vanity, something like fifty millions to needy commercial houses, and soon afterwards involved himself in embarrassment thereby. To help himself out of trouble he had transferred the bonds of the Receivers-General to the Bank of France, and received advances upon them. Thus, when, shortly afterwards, the Bank was disquieted by a sudden demand for the redemption of a large part of its notes, and turned itself for relief to the *Receveurs*, with a request that they would come to its aid, and make payments on account, it transpired that Duprez had already received the larger part of the moneys arising upon them, and nothing remained but a direct application to him for the discharge of his obligations at the Bank. Duprez, who was not so situated that he could compromise this piece of deception, found himself compelled to lay the whole condition of his pecuniary affairs before the eyes of the Bank Directors. In consequence of this business, which soon became known, and the ill-concealed anxiety of the Directors themselves, the Bank suddenly fell into discredit; everybody wanted his notes cashed, and, to the universal alarm of the community, the Bank had to suspend its specie payments.

It was on the day after the battle of Austerlitz that this intelligence reached Napoleon. In something less than a fortnight after this occurrence the Minister Barbé-Marbois had endeavored to remedy the first embarrassment of the State Treasury, by dispatching a courier to Madrid, with a request for Ouvrard to immediately send him the half of the first payment of bills for twenty millions made by the Spanish Government, that is to say, the sum of ten millions, and give him the full and free disposal of the same. Ouvrard had so much confidence in the uprightness of the Minister, that he at once sent him the bills for ten millions of piastres, without deduction. Directly afterwards there appeared

in Madrid an agent of the Minister, called Wanté, with a ministerial order addressed to Ouvrard, in which the latter was required to surrender cash and every species of Spanish values into the hands of the bearer, and thereupon to return without further delay to Paris. A few days later Ouvrard received complete information concerning the Paris Bank crisis above-mentioned. Wanté had expressed a wish to be presented to the Prince of Peace, and Ouvrard had instantly satisfied his desire. Soler, the Minister of Finance, who happened to be present, turned to Wanté with the words, "Monsieur, if anything has remained undone, you must look to Mr. Ouvrard for it; he has not asked it, since I have received full orders to grant him everything." Wanté comprehended in a moment the credit Ouvrard enjoyed, and saw that the French Ministry might and should repose implicit confidence in him: so, after regularly informing himself in relation to Ouvrard's general position, he deemed it incumbent upon him to return to Paris, after having first congratulated Ouvrard upon the influence he had gained.

On the day after his departure Godoy learned, through his private correspondence, that he would, most probably, within a few days, be desired to arrest Ouvrard without further ceremony, and forward him to Paris. Filled with sympathy, the Prince exhibited this letter to his friend Ouvrard, and advised him to depart at once to America, and there await the upshot of these erroneous views entertained by the French government; a frigate was at his disposal for this purpose. But Ouvrard responded that he needed no frigate to take him to America, but only a sufficient escort to Bayonne, whence he would pursue the most direct route to Paris.

Napoleon, who had won the reward of his victorious campaign against Austria at the peace of Presburg, and had reached Paris on his return by the 26th of January, 1806, the next evening summoned into his presence Messrs. Ouvrard, Vanlerberghe, and Desprez (whom Thiers, in the sixth volume of his History of the Empire, styles, on his own authority, the "*assembled merchants les negocians reunis*"). Ouvrard, however, did not get the message sent to him, and consequently only the other two were

present. They were so overwhelmed by the first outburst of the Emperor's wrath, that Thiers feels himself called upon to say that they shed hot tears. Napoleon had required the Arch-Chancellor *Cambacères* to acquaint him with the whole nature of the entanglement that had arisen between the three named gentlemen, the public Treasury and the Bank of France. But who was prepared to evolve light from such a chaos, unless it were Ouvrard himself? Napoleon, who could not even hear that name without an ebullition of the most intense anger, was at first disposed to have all three incarcerated at Vincennes, but finally listened to Cambacères, who advised him to save as much as possible from this unintentional wreck, and, with that intent, to take possession of all their papers, money, and effects. His resolution was already fixed, when he summoned the State Council together to consult in relation to the form, and Barbé Marbois had begun to read a complete report concerning the affair, when his very first words were interrupted by Napoleon's declaration, that he knew perfectly well what he had to do. "If," said the Emperor, "these men do not give up to me everything they own, and Spain does not pay me all she owes, I will send them to Vincennes, and an army to Madrid." However, Napoleon decided to hear what Ouvrard had to say, and to that end again summoned him on February 6th. Scarcely had the latter uttered a couple of words, after making his appearance in the room of audience, when the Emperor called his State Secretary to him, and said, "Mr. Maret, read my decree to this gentleman!" By the decree referred to, the three partners were declared to be indebted to the State in the sum of 87,000,000 francs, and bound in obligations of various kinds, which were then, on Ouvrard's account, partly in the hands of Messrs. Hope & Co., and partly in the State Treasury, to pay the total sum of 69,000,000, and give their own notes for the remaining 18,000,000. When this decree had been read aloud, the Emperor broke out upon Ouvrard, and asked what security he could give for the payment of this sum. The reply was that the whole amount should be paid, if the management of his own affairs were left in his (Ouvrard's) hands. "Now, then," said Napoleon, "I count upon that. I will substitute another decree for this one,



by which all that you have in the hands of Hope & Co. shall remain under my direction." Ouvrard replied that no other result could be expected from these measures, than that England would put a stop to the exportation of silver dollars from Mexico, and that Spain herself would withdraw from her agreements. This second decree, published February 18th, directed that each and every bill drawn by Ouvrard on the Cashier of the Consolidation Fund, Don Manuel Sirto Espinosa, at Madrid, and accepted by the latter, as detailed in the provisional agreement, made and concluded in the interim, on the 18th of November, 1805, should be withdrawn from the hands of the holders, and transferred to the French State Treasury, viz., the amount of 7,260,849 piastres, which Messrs. Leguin and Michael Jeune, in Paris, sub-contractors of Ouvrard and his associates, then held as guaranties. This, it furthermore intimated, must be delivered back within the space of twenty-four hours.

A courier, who was dispatched to Madrid the very next morning, took the Spanish Government word that this decree had been made public, and that Spain was released from her engagement with Ouvrard. The latter was thus shut out from all activity, and learned, a short time afterwards, through an official announcement in the *Moniteur*, that not 87,000,000 but 141,000,000 was the amount for which he and his associates had to figure as debtors to the State. Ouvrard and Vanlerberghe succeeded in liquidating this enormous liability; but a host of other creditors were pressing their claims, and so embarrassed the further arrangement of their business, that on the 31st of December, 1807, they were obliged at length to hand in their declaration of insolvency to the Tribunal of Commerce, at Paris.

In regard to the moneys, bills, and other values in the hands of Messrs. Hope & Co., Napoleon had reckoned without his host. This powerful House, which then stood at the head of the mercantile order throughout the world, and, in Holland not only felt itself perfectly independent, but considered itself equal in financial matters to any potentate on earth, and entitled to occupy a similar footing with them, could not recognize that it was in any manner bound by the imperial decree. Yet Napoleon was weak enough to think differ

ently. He had dictated a letter, addressed to Messrs. Hope & Co., in the hand-writing of Mollien, the successor of Barbé Marbois, who had been removed. This missive, couched in the language of a master to his servant, contained the following words: "You have made enough money in the Louisiana business to leave me no room to doubt that you will, *without reservation*, comply with any order I may see fit to make." He then sent this letter, without Ouvrard's consent, by an Inspector of Finance, to Amsterdam. However, the Finance Inspector was very coolly received, and had to come back without accomplishing anything. Soon afterwards Napoleon thought it advisable to send the Baron Louis—afterwards Louis Philippe's first Minister of Finance—to Holland to explore the ground, and discover what resources Ouvrard might have there. Baron Louis presented himself to the Messrs. Hope, and disclosed the object of his visit. Mr. Labouchère, who received him, at once replied: "Whether we have money in our hands for Mr. Ouvrard, or not, Baron, is not a matter for which we are obliged to render any account to you; and the inappropriateness of your present visit must have been apparent to yourself!"

This anecdote, related by Ouvrard himself, I can offer as simple truth, for I have likewise heard it repeated frequently by Mr. Labouchère also, who could not suppress a feeling of inward pride, whenever he got an opportunity, to illustrate his entire independence of the man, at whose feet all Europe bent the knee. He considered Napoleon the greatest tyrant the world had ever seen, but was ever ready to defend him against any charge of blood-thirstiness, an accusation which, like many others in that time, and amid the general exasperation of the fiercest passions, was constantly repeated. "A taste for blood," he used often to say, "was not a trait of Napoleon; but, as a means to an end, he was as ready to lay his hands upon it as upon any other that chanced to be within reach."

The miscalculation made by Napoleon, in imagining that the Spanish bills on Mexico would be just as good values in his hands as in those of Messrs. Hope & Co., was not long in making itself evident. In the first place, there were, nowhere on the continent,

capitalists to be found, whose means were so immense as the resources controlled by Messrs. Hope, who were able to invest a portion of their vast funds in the purchase of such State paper, for the eventual payment of the same had to take place in another quarter of the globe. They were, moreover, of a doubtful nature, and, finally, the definitive realization of the proceeds was, in any event, remote, and could not be transformed into anything directly accessible. Secondly, Messrs. Hope, through their close relations with the Barings—Mr. Labouchère himself the son-in-law of the eldest head of that house, Sir Francis Baring, and the latter, again, the intimate friend of the then Marquis of Lansdowne, formerly Viscount Shelbourne, and of the Marquis of Wellesley—was perhaps the *only* firm in a position to convince the Pitt ministry, that the importation of piastres from Mexico was a wholesome transaction for British commerce, and for the East India Company, and to persuade them that in *their eyes alone* could these values have a nominal worth, and that *they alone* could impart it to them. Count Mollien, the French Minister of Finance to whom the bills and papers wrested from Ouvrard had been transferred, was not long in making this discovery. Perfectly understanding, as he may have done readily enough, what course the Messrs. Hope took with their drafts and notes of the same kind, he probably conceived that he had nothing more to do than to send them to Mr. Felix de Beaujour, the Consul-General at Philadelphia, for negotiation.

When the latter received these bills he was thrown into great perplexity. He had felt the pulse of some of the more important French houses in Philadelphia, such as that of Stephen Girard, L. Clapier, and others. No one would have anything to do with the doubtful bills, and there was no means at hand of presenting them in Mexico. Some small sums might have been got together, but when the object consisted of millions, to what purpose were such negotiations? Hence, De Beaujour was compelled to make application to Parish for his advice. It was to have been foreseen, that from this a negotiation, and finally a contract, must arise between these two men. The nature of the transaction has ever remained a secret between them. For when,



in the winter of 1808-'09, I was busied with the first provisional winding up of our heavy operations, I could not find the slightest trace of the business in the correspondence, nor the copy-books, nor in the current account-book of Mr. Parish—the only books that I saw. There was neither any stipulation of conditions, nor sums to be paid. The piastres arrived from time to time in the usual schooners, and were at once delivered to M. de Beaujour. One thing, however, I had an opportunity of certainly knowing, namely, that the sum total of the bills drawn by the French Consul did not exceed 2,000,000 piastres. Some of the bills violently taken from Ouvrard, again found their way into the hands of Messrs. Hope.

Upon the occasion of Ouvrard's subsequently making over, of his own accord, all his assets, in Spain as well as in the hands of Messrs. Hope, to the Public Treasury, (*Tresor Public*) the latter saw itself unavoidably compelled to come to an understanding with that firm. Count Mollien was too shrewd a business-man not to perceive the necessity and, at the same time, the advantage, of an amicable arrangement with the Hopes, especially as the power of Napoleon was held at bay by the moral independence of the great mercantile house; and as there was a possibility of procuring from the latter what M. de Beaujour had neither the means nor the influence to obtain—that is to say, advances on account. Had not Napoleon's violent and arbitrary dissolution of the close relations existing between Ouvrard and the Spanish Court cut off the first productive moneyed resources of the Spanish Crown, the silver mines of Mexico would, after the unavoidable delay of a few months, perhaps of a single year, required to complete the necessary preparation, have long been made tributary to the treasury of France. What afterwards occurred, in consequence of the forced abdication of Charles IV. and his next heir to the throne, at Bayonne, the separation of the colonies from the mother country would have brought about. The military supremacy of Napoleon had found its natural limits in America, and the commands of the new monarch imposed upon Spain were totally disregarded. It is impossible to read the exposition of Ouvrard's relations and entanglements, given by Thiers in the

22d and 24th chapters of his Sixth Volume, without being convinced that the author's aim has constantly been to make his hero appear as blameless as possible in that whole affair; for by the exercise of the least degree of unprejudiced judgment, in regard to the entire course pursued, from the time of Napoleon's return after the Peace of Presburg, he must have perceived that if, as he affirms, the colossal schemes and combinations of Ouvrard had brought great embarrassment upon the French Treasury, and especially on the Bank, that circumstance was chiefly ascribable to the insufficiency of the united revenues of the French and Spanish governments to supply their own State necessities and the enormous expenses of Napoleon's military operations. Both countries were forbidden all commerce by sea, and as export trade was thus rendered impossible, their ready money had to go abroad, to pay the indispensable demands for colonial and other goods. Spain had been compelled to declare war against England, and then to assume an obligation to pay during the continuance of that war an annual subsidy of 72,000,000 of francs, and that exactly at a time when the existing hostilities had cut off the usual supplies of ready money flowing in to her from her American Colonies. Ouvrard was useful, nay, almost indispensable to Napoleon, as an inventive head who could instantly find millions to satisfy the Emperor's necessities and whims—farther than this he either would not, or did not see. As it was part of his policy to retake from the so called pilferers of the public income—he looked on Ouvrard as such—what they might have succeeded in getting by dishonest management in spite of him, it was a matter of no concern what means Ouvrard might employ in procuring the money he so constantly required. Yet no very great insight or talent for computation was needed to arrive at the result, that if the directly available means of France were insufficient to meet the usual State expenses and Bonaparte's inordinate demands, and that if Spain was despoiled of the only resource by which she could pretend to discharge her debt, and loans furthermore rendered impossible, through the want of confidence felt by all foreign capitalists, neither an Ouvrard nor any one else could stop the leakage daily and incessantly made by Napoleon. It was, then, necessary to bear upon the natural revenues of State beforehand,

by turning into money, a long time previously to their falling due, the notes of the Receivers General, which the Bank continued to discount. So long as the public was willing to receive the bank-notes emitted instead of money, this foolish system might be protracted, but the first rumor of discredit must inevitably overthrow the frail structure, notwithstanding all Ouvrard's combinations. This fact could not escape the eye of any well-informed person, and hence Thiers himself, in spite of his efforts to make Napoleon appear as free from blame as possible, finally makes the following confession, with evident unwillingness: "It must, however, for the sake of justice be admitted, that to the Emperor himself a great portion"—(I would say the greatest portion)—"of the blame must be ascribed which this circumstance deserves; since he, with great obstinacy and for much too long a time, allowed the weight of these enormous burdens to rest upon the feeble exertions of M. de Marbois, without troubling himself about providing for the extraordinary means these circumstances demanded." The removal of M. de Marbois, the arbitrary measures employed with Ouvrard and his associates, the anathema he fulminated against them, will not serve him before the eyes of posterity to cloak the want of those qualities, which as a ruler he should have possessed, and which were indispensable in controlling the general interests of state. These qualities consisted in a sound appreciation of his financial relations, and unswerving, constant watchfulness in regard to the changes arising in the circumstances that surrounded them. It was the balance of his finances that Napoleon usually neglected, in his calculations.

I have been necessarily obliged to make this, perhaps, too lengthy digression—which also lies far from the aim of these memoirs—because Ouvrard, as the real originator of national credit in France, as the result will show, rendered great and incontestible service to his country; and yet, instead of being rated as a man of genius, he is usually regarded as an adventurer. It is beyond a doubt, that the circumstances under which he was destined to develop this genius and the activity of his mind, were among the most extraordinary which the world has yet seen, and that the possibility of their return could now scarcely be admitted.



## CHAPTER VI.

### FORCED ABANDONMENT OF VERY IMPORTANT OPERATIONS.

My return to Philadelphia—Acquaintance with Robert Fulton at New York—A glance at his history—The trial-trip of the first steamboat *Clermont* from New York for Albany—Departure for Havana, to call in the government-exchange of 700,000 piastres—Negotiation with the Intendant-General Roubaud—Exchange of these bills for a single one drawn to my order, and a bill for 945,000 dollars on the viceroy of Mexico given me,—the largest in amount I ever indorsed—I take passage from Havana in the schooner “*Merchant*,” bound for Baltimore.

It was in the summer of 1807 when we, Lestapis in Mexico and I in New Orleans, received the first intimation from Parish in Philadelphia, that the existing condition of things would bring us rapidly nearer the termination of our agencies, which had at first been counted upon for years. So far as I in particular was concerned, there was no necessity for my remaining in New Orleans longer than the settlement of my affairs in that city required, that is to say, about one month. The arrangements made by Parish with Oliver and Brothers, led to natural alteration of the original plan, according to which assorted cargoes were to come from Europe to New Orleans, and thence be forwarded to Vera Cruz, and the proceeds and other remittances of money were also to be received at New Orleans, on their way to Europe. Yet, there were great difficulties in the way of forwarding the proceeds, and transferring the licenses; since good bills of exchange on the North and on England were very scarce, and could be had only in small quantities; and for shipments to Europe there were hardly two houses to which I could have made advances with any

thing like security. In August, 1807, I had completed my final arrangements, intrusted the presentation of several bills that yet had some time to run, and amounting in all to about 40,000 dollars, to Messrs. Amory and Callender, and returned to the North, where my services were soon needed in a new business at Havana.

It was exactly at this time that I, then staying at one of the most celebrated boarding-houses in the city of New York, the Widow Gallop's, on Broadway, while engaged in making my preparations for departure, by mere chance, at breakfast, made the acquaintance of a gentleman who was just about to give the world the first example of steam-navigation. The reader will readily guess that I am now referring to Robert Fulton, and his newly-built steamer "Clermont," constructed by him at his own expense. It was then a topic in the mouth of every body, as the attempt he proposed in a short time to make, to carry his plan into execution, was the object of universal curiosity. My new acquaintance wanted me to be present, and witness the departure of his steamboat, which was to take place from the bank of the Hudson river, at 12 o'clock; and, indeed, it did not require much persuasion to induce me to accede to this request. So I saw this curious and wonderful structure—130 feet in length, 16½ feet broad, 7 feet depth of hold, rating 160 tons, as it had been described, and containing about 450 passengers—leave the wharf as the clock struck twelve, make right for the middle of the stream, and describe a circle three times in succession. Then, defying the force of the winds and waves alike, it dashed gallantly along its way to Albany, as though the most favorable breeze were filling its sails. A vociferous cheer arose from the thousands assembled on both banks of the Hudson to witness, with their own eyes, the reality of this truly grand experiment, and its brilliant success.

It is the lot of all remarkable and generally useful inventions to be the object of dispute, claimed by the ambition of various nations, and in contending for it, the *sum cuique* is neither made a habit, nor regarded as a duty. Even the purely accidental and by no means splendid invention of gunpowder is denied to

the German monk who discovered it—the Chinese, they say, had used it long before. The art of printing, too, had been lying hidden in some nook or corner of Lombardy, long ere Guttenberg and Faust touched it. It is, therefore, nothing strange, that the priority in discovering the applicability of steam navigation should have been contested with Fulton by the Scotch, and even the French. We may let these various claims rest on their own intrinsic merit; but one thing can never be brought into question, viz., the unusual perseverance with which Fulton followed up his plans, after the depth of his conviction made him recognize, only in one point of view, the difficulty of realizing it, and the constancy and devoted earnestness that did not hesitate to make any sacrifice, so soon as this difficulty was removed or overcome.

The reader will be enabled to make up his own mind, in relation to all this, to Fulton's right to act as the father of steam navigation, to his unexampled energy under the crushing pressure of so many blows and caprices of fortune, his courage in doing what would be called, in mercantile language, risking his all upon a single card, whenever a lucky turn of affairs suddenly opened to him a way to the execution of his plans.

Fulton was born somewhere between the years 1768 and 1770, in the State of Pennsylvania, and began his career as apprentice to a goldsmith, in Philadelphia. He soon gave evidence of great and manifold talents, among which—when a moneyed friend furnished him with the means of visiting London—a special capacity for mechanics, and a fondness for the study of the steam engine and its possible uses, speedily developed themselves.

In the English capital he made the acquaintance of a fellow-countryman, called James Rumsey, and from him probably gathered the idea of applying steam to navigation; for Rumsey had dealt with a certain John Fitch a long time in Philadelphia, and had, as early as the year 1788, been an applicant, in common with him, for a patent guarantying the exclusive navigation by steam of all the waters of Pennsylvania. They had failed in this effort, because their petition set forth no express method of the application to ships and boats; and the Legislature of Pennsylvania very properly hesitated to grant a patent for the undefined



special application for a mere idea, of which several might be in the possession at the same time, and, as it has since appeared, really were. In England, Rumsey was more fortunate, and procured a patent on the 24th of March, 1790.

The drawing of the steamship planned by Fitch is to be found in the first volume of Brewster's Encyclopedia. The vessel was to be propelled by means of stern-wheels; and the scheme differs but little from that of Rumsey, who was fortunate enough, in London, to find an American capitalist, and to interest him in the affair. Just as the construction of the vessel had been commenced, the latter died. The parties interested tried to go on with it, but did not succeed.

At the same time several Englishmen and Scotchmen came forward with similar projects, particularly an engineer called Symington, who, after he had, as early as 1788 and 1789, become more or less acquainted with the plans of the American, at length, some twelve years later, succeeded in completing a steam vessel, which he named the Charlotte Dundas, and set it in motion, with quite a favorable result, on the Forth-and-Clyde Canal. He thereupon received orders to build several similar boats for the navigation of the same canal, with the prospect of constructing many more for the Bridgewater Canal. But the Board of Directors of the Forth-and-Clyde Canal opposed the execution of this plan. The Duke of Bridgewater died, and Symington, who had spent a considerable portion of his fortune in experiments of all kinds, drew back, and occupied himself with various improvements of his plan, for which he received patents from time to time.

Yet, of all the projects relating to the introduction of steam navigation, none were carried into complete execution, until, finally, after the peace concluded at Ghent, in 1814, between England and the United States, English travellers, convinced, probably, by the success of Fulton's experiment in America, spread the knowledge of it in their own country, incited others to follow Fulton's example, and ere long awakened a general desire to make the history of navigation by steam a subject of pursuit, and to disseminate the assertion, that the American was not its inventor, but that its origin was in the first instance British, and that

Fulton could claim only the merit of having transplanted it to American soil.

In the meanwhile Fulton had not been idle, but, with all the peculiar energy of the American enterprising character, had been straining every nerve to procure the introduction of navigation by steam into his country. However, he found but little vantage-ground, and secured but little faith and no assistance in his undertaking even from his family, the Livingstons, of New York State, most of whom were wealthy, some of them having already been engaged in every description of steamboat and steamship project. This drove him again to Europe, and from England to Paris, where Chancellor Livingston, a relative, was then residing as Ambassador for the United States, and could make him acquainted with scientific men of all classes. He likewise fell-in with another relative, Robert Livingston, who had, previously to that time, made experiments in steam navigation, in connection with his countryman Stevens. Fulton and Robert Livingston hereupon had a steam-vessel built at their joint expense. At the moment when it was to perform its first evolutions on the Seine, before the eyes of the authorities and distinguished personages invited thither to witness it, it broke in two, and went to pieces, with the weight of its unwieldy machinery, which had unavoidably been constructed in England.

Fulton, not at all disheartened by this, bethought himself of other projects, and at length perfected plans of certain machines, which he offered to the Government, and which were adapted to the destruction, by sub-marine means, of the English squadron then blockading and annoying Cherbourg. These machines were to be sunken in the water, through which they would make their way, propelled by steam, to the keels of the hostile ships, and, there attaching themselves, explode and destroy the enemy. The plan was, according to custom, referred to a Committee of the War Ministry and the Engineer Corps, but regarded by them as scarcely worth the trouble of an investigation. The jealousy with which the French engineers have ever looked upon strangers is notorious. Besides this, the unsuccessful trial on the Seine worked greatly to Fulton's disadvantage. Gradually his impa-

tience reached a point where it no longer knew any bounds. He stormed the Ministry, the Committee, never received any satisfactory answer, and at length, backed by the Ambassador Livingston's influence, repeatedly made his way to the presence of Napoleon. The latter was taken up with quite other things, and finally, at a court ball, expressed his displeasure at Fulton's headlong zeal in the following words to Livingston: "*Debarrassez-moi de ce fou d'Américain!*"—"Rid me of this fool of an American!" Fulton felt that there was no longer any field open for him in Paris. So he returned to England, assumed the name of Major Francis, and found means to bring his project before the Board of Admiralty, at whose head stood the well-known minister Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville. The idea was then conceived of blowing up the French *ligne d'embassade*, and the flotillas of Bologne and Cherbourg, by means of these inventions, which Fulton called *torpedoes* and *catamarans*. The Navy Committee and Fulton agreed upon the price of £40,000 sterling, for which the latter was to make over his invention to the British Government, and receive the pay when a first successful trial had been accomplished. The English Admiralty had the machines prepared by their workmen, and intrusted their application to the mighty hands of Lord Nelson, who at that time commanded the English fleet off Bologne. The experiment, however, was unsuccessful; the machines exploded out of the water before they reached the French squadron. Of course there was no further thought of paying Fulton; yet the latter was so unremitting and obstinate in laying the whole blame of failure on the unskilful construction of the machines, that the Admiralty at last agreed to appoint a special committee, in whose presence the inventor should, with a machine prepared under his own personal inspection, prove the practicability of the plan at his own expense and risk; that is to say, on a vessel belonging to himself. On the day fixed Fulton repaired with the Committee, Dundas at its head, to Deal, where a small vessel under the American flag, and purchased by him, lay at anchor in the Roads. Fulton, holding the apparatus in his hand, requested the Committee-men present to glance at their watches. It was just twelve o'clock when he let his torpedo fall into the water, with these words,



"In precisely five-and-twenty minutes, gentlemen, you will see my ship yonder fly into the air!" It happened as he said. The experiment was completely successful, and Fulton of course stood to the stipulated price.

On the Continent, in the meanwhile, the tables had been turned. Napoleon's eye was bent upon another object than the invasion of England. His attention was absorbed in the war with Russia and Austria, and hence the danger that threatened the English shores was no longer so pressing. Consequently an arrangement was come to with Major Francis, who finally accepted one half the amount that had been promised to him, and returned with the money to New York, under his own proper name of Fulton.

Now, when he no longer was dependent upon outside help, his favorite idea revived in him again, with fresh and increased vigor. He built, at his own expense, the large steam vessel previously described, and named it after *Clermont*, the country-seat of his friend, the Chancellor Livingston. It reached Clermont, at a distance of 110 miles, within twenty-four hours, left that point again at nine o'clock, on the next morning, and arrived at Albany, some forty-seven miles farther, in about eight hours. It had thus made nearly five miles per hour against wind and current.

This steamboat was the first that its owner began to employ to a practical purpose and valuable result. I have, elsewhere, related the further history of Fulton, who lived only eight years after the epoch of his success.\*

Among the Bills taken from Ouvrard's portfolio by Napoleon, were some 105 drafts, to the amount of 700,000 piastres, drawn by the Spanish Minister of Finance, Don Miguel Cayetano Soler on the "Caja de Consolidacion," or Consolidation Fund, in Havana. Count Mollien had sent them to Messrs. Hope & Co., from whose hands they came to mine. The letter of advices from the before-mentioned drawer Soler to the Don Raphael Gomez Roubaud, the Director of the Consolidation Fund, in Havana, said expressly that these bills were to be paid only *in silver*, and in no other kind

\* See my article entitled "Robert Fulton and steam Navigation," in No. 20, of the "Deutschen Handelzeitung," issue of May 20, 1849.

of coin, and, in the two letters of introduction accompanying the advices, for the benefit of the agent intrusted with the presentation of the bills, whose name was left in blank, the same explicit direction was repeated. The blanks referred to, were now filled with my name. One of these letters of recommendation was for the Intendant-General Roubaud, the other for the Governor-General of the Island of Cuba, the Marquis de Someruelos. Both of them contained an especial request to treat the bearer with *marked politeness*: the reason why I here mention this circumstance, will appear farther on in my narrative.

We had already learned in Philadelphia that, since the breaking off of communications with Mexico, there were no more silver dollars to be found in all Cuba, and that the only current values and tenders there consisted in doubloons which were accepted in the United States, at  $15\frac{1}{8}$  piastres, but were worth from  $17\frac{3}{4}$  to 18 in Havana and the Island of Cuba generally, where they then circulated, at that price. There was no doubt whatever that the bills must be paid at Havana, and, as the Spanish Government had itself directed, in *silver*, and, since the absolute impossibility of making such payment existed, the idea naturally arose of proposing to the Government of the Island an exchange for bills on Mexico, with a small gratification of, say 5 per cent., for premium difference. I had agreed with Parish, that even at par value such an exchange, in case the Cuban Government consented to it, would be a suitable arrangement. In order to facilitate the negotiations at Havana, I had provided myself with an attest of the then Marquis de Castel-Urujo, Spanish Minister at Washington City, who happened to be in Philadelphia. This certificate testified that the premium of insurance on moneys sent from Vera Cruz to the United States, was then from 20 to 25 per cent. I, hereupon, embarked in one of the clippers, a schooner named "*Collector*," for Havana, and dispatched the same vessel immediately on my arrival, to Vera Cruz, to ship piastres for Philadelphia, with a request to Parish to send the same craft again to me for the purpose of taking further advices to Vera Cruz.

On the next morning, I paid my visit to the Marquis de Someruelos, the Captain General, and then waited upon the Intendant

Don Raphael Gomez Roubaud, to whom the former had referred me, and for whom, as I have already intimated, I held a letter. Both these gentlemen received me with extraordinary politeness, but also, with the plain confession that they must employ the few resources that present circumstances left at their disposal, for their own purposes; that they had no money, above all, silver dollars, and that I should unavoidably have to retire without the funds. "In the mean time," remarked the Intendant, "we are not now treating of a final answer, and will let the matter rest a while longer under consideration." I earnestly requested a speedy interview, and it was appointed for the third day. Upon this occasion, the Intendant declared that he was ready to cash the bills, if I would consent to take doubloons in payment, at 18 piastres a piece. I pointed to the phraseology of the bills, and the particular directions of Soler, the Financial Minister at Madrid, and said that I could accept nothing but silver. "We have not got it," he replied, "and cannot give it to you, if you were to squeeze us. If you will not take doubloons, you will get nothing at all!" I expostulated with him, and pointed out that by his arrangement I would lose three piastres on every doubloon. If, I added, any such plan was to be adopted, it could only base itself upon counting me the doubloons at 15 instead of 18 piastres. He, at length, got angry, and said to me in a stern and loud voice:—"Mr. Nolte, we are not accustomed to being told by strangers what we shall do, and when strangers come to us with such pretensions, we send them there." So saying, he pointed with his forefinger to the lofty Moro Castle, which commands the entrance of the harbor, and was right before us where we stood.

"Indeed!" was my response. "Now, I should very much like to see the interior of a fortress to which strangers are scrupulously denied admission." He looked at me with some surprise, but very gravely, and then continued: "Can we not come to an understanding? I can so arrange it, that you may get the whole amount in sugar—will you take it?" My answer was, that I had not come to buy sugar, what else could it be! "But what will you do, then, when no other kind of payment is possible?" "I will enter my protest," said I, "and go very quietly back with



my bills." "A protest?" he almost shouted, "you cannot find in the whole colony, one single notary who would dare to protest the bills of the government." "I have provided against that," was my rejoinder, "for, before my departure from Philadelphia, I had myself legally made a Notary, my signature will be certified as good in law by the Marquis de Castel Urujo, and so everything is in regular form and order—*nous sommes en règle*," were my last words, for we conversed in the French language. I had learned from good authority, in the city, that Don Raphael had been Secretary to the Spanish Legation at Paris, and that he had received the appointment of Intendant General and Director of the Tobacco-Factory—a royal manufactory of cigars—through the influence of Prince Talleyrand, who was fond of him. I availed myself of this circumstance to express to the Intendant my regret that my very simple mission had to contend with so many obstacles, and that I feared all this would produce a bad impression at Paris, especially upon one person whom we both respected. He at once responded in his bad French, and with a certain degree of vivacity, "*Personne que Monsú Talleyrand!*" He then looked very grave, and at length said: "Have you nothing to propose to me?" He was now at the point where I wished to have him. My reply was not long in coming, and I endeavored to make him understand, that as we had a regular establishment in Mexico for the presentation of our numerous bills, it would perhaps be the best and shortest plan to give me a bill on the Viceroy of Mexico, merely adding, that getting my money there was not the same as receiving it in Havana, and hence he would, of course, perceive that this exchange could not be made without a certain premium! He finally said, "Give me your ideas in writing, and we shall then see how we can come to an arrangement with each other!"

The mention of Talleyrand's name had already worked in some degree, but how deep an impression it was yet destined to produce will be apparent to my readers from what is to follow. I drew up my letter to the Intendant, declared to him the conditions under which I would consent to an exchange of the bills; and on the principle that much must be demanded, in order to receive something, asked for a premium of thirty-five per cent., basing

this demand upon the fact, that the premium of insurance from Vera Cruz to Philadelphia was at twenty-five per cent. I then dispatched my letter, which was written in the French language, to the official personages. The foreign idiom I had employed rendered necessary a translation into Spanish, communication of the translated document to the Captain-General, and gave rise to a correspondence, to which, from the interminable questions propounded, I could see no end. I waited several days, in no very pleasant mood, for a reply. Christmas was approaching, and, upon the evening before that universal holiday, I went, like everybody else, quite alone to the Cathedral. In one of the obscurely-illuminated passages of that edifice I all at once heard my name pronounced, in a subdued voice, at my shoulder. "Mr. Nolte! Mr. Nolte!" I glanced round and saw, close behind me, a man not yet forty, to judge by his appearance, but to whom a certain bureaucratic air seemed to have become a second nature. "You are," he continued, "a German, if I am not mistaken?" "Yes," I replied, "of German descent at least." "Well," he added, "I am employed in the offices of the Consolidation Fund. I know for what purpose you are here, have read all your letters, and can, perhaps, render you a service as a fellow-countryman. You write extremely well, and your arguments are irresistible; but you will not bring the business through after that fashion in this country. You must try another plan"—here he made a motion with his thumb and forefinger, as though he were counting money—"our Intendant is very greedy for gold. The only argument that touches him is this"—and here he repeated his finger-play.

I thanked him for his information, inquired his name, and then asked him who was the person most confidentially favored by the Intendant. He named to me a Mr. Santa Maria, former associate partner of the house of Cuesta & Santa Maria, who lived in a certain degree of retirement, but still magnificently, in the suburb called the Salú. After the holiday I hastened to pave my way to this individual. My correspondent, Don Salvador de Martiartu, who subsequently became so rich, and who had not been able to give me one single word of useful advice, or any useful indication of the plan I ought to pursue, was evidently excited when I made

inquiries concerning Senor Santa Maria, said that the latter was a sly dog, and not to be trusted, but a man greatly respected, and one who kept the best table, after the Spanish style, in Havana. He did not, however, belong to his acquaintance.

I then applied to Mr. James Drake, an Englishman, married to a Spanish lady, and who was well known in the mercantile world. He told me he would make me acquainted with Santa Maria; that he was a skilful manager, and I must be on my guard, for he was not to be trusted beyond a finger's breadth. Thus I succeeded in meeting Santa Maria, who gave me to understand, at our very first interview, that he knew my whole business, the Intendant had told him everything, and he had intended to seek me out the very next day, for the purpose of offering me his services. I concluded from this, in my own mind, that the Intendant had instructed him to approach me, and find out what could be made of me. "You require," he said, with a laugh, "thirty-five per cent. to get your dollars from Mexico. Do you think it will be possible to procure as much as that?" "Ay! why not?" was my answer; "when one has the right on his side, and knows how to talk!" While I was uttering these words, I too used the peculiar motion of the fingers employed by the German clerk of the *Caja de Consolidacion*. "I see," continued Santa Maria, "that we shall readily understand each other. Now, furnish me with any plausible calculation whatever, that it would be better for this government to give you a bill of exchange on Mexico for the 700,000 silver piastres, with the addition of thirty-five per cent., than to let you take 46,666 $\frac{2}{3}$  doubloons out of the country—for our treasury is empty—and I will guarantee the rest. Hold your purse ready." Upon this we separated, and after some use of arithmetic, backwards and forwards, I next day brought him the following brief calculation:—

#### MEMORANDUM.

Were I to accept doubloons at 18 piasters apiece, which I could dispose of and turn into current money only at 15, in the United States, a loss would thence arise for me, of 16 $\frac{2}{3}$  per cent. Now, in order to make up this loss, which I, being entitled to be paid silver, am not bound to suffer, I should have



to receive 840,000 piastres in gold, whereby the government would be obliged to pay out a surplusage of 140,000 piastres more than if they gave me silver.

	\$840,000
Less 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, - - - -	140,000
	<hr/> \$700,000.

Again, the sum paid out must be replaced by importation from Mexico, and to cover this capital of \$840,000 with insurance, - - \$988,235

must be insured. From Vera Cruz to Philadelphia, the premium is 25 per cent. but from Vera Cruz to Havana, I count only some 15 per cent. - - - - 148,235

The amount covered, - - - - - 840,000

The Government's loss, - - - - - 140,000

Outlay for premium, - - - - - 148,235

Total outlay, - - - - - \$288,235

The premium of 35 per cent. asked by me, for 700,000 piastres, amounts to - - - - - 245,000

Consequently, the Government of Cuba would save by my proposed operation, - - - - - \$43,235

When I took this memorandum to Santa Maria his eyes danced again. "Why," he shouted, "that's clear enough to stun a man! Not another word is needed!" A couple of days later he let me know that the Intendant had agreed, and the only thing to be arranged now was, what amount I was going to give him and the Intendant together. I finally settled with him on two per cent. of the \$700,000, whenever the new bill of exchange was handed over, that is, \$14,000.

The Intendant could not officiate in government matters without the concurrence of the Captain-General, and it was therefore necessary to get his assent to the exchange of bills. The Marquis de Someruelos, a thoroughly honorable man, said that he would not have a word to say in the matter, if the Consulate approved of the calculation. This Consulate was composed of three of the first Spanish merchants in Havana, one of whom had the reputation of being an incorruptible man; but the others were accustomed to listen only to *jingling* arguments. The next step, now, was to procure the desired adoption of my plan by these

men. After Santa Maria had felt the pulse of both the easy-conscienced gentlemen, he told me that three thousand dollars would be enough "*pour terminer l'affaire*"—to wind up the affair! I handed over the money, and a week afterwards received, in two remittances, a single bill on the Viceroy of Mexico, for the total sum of \$945,000. The heaviest indorsement I ever gave was this, of course, when I dispatched it to Villanueva. The Intendant and I had agreed that my hundred and five bills were to be delivered only when the intelligence came from Mexico that his draft had been honored; but they should remain, until that time, in a packet, stamped with both our seals, in the safe of the *Caja de Consolidacion*.

After the ultimate conclusion of our business negotiation, the Intendant gave me a splendid dinner in the Palace of the Intendancy, and, according to the custom at that time prevailing in Havana, I was placed alone at the head of the table. On my right sat the Intendant, and the whole company, excepting Mr. James Drake, who sat on my left in plain citizen's dress, were attired in bestarred and beribboned uniforms. When the party was breaking up in the evening, the Intendant took me aside, and quietly said, "When you write to Paris do not forget to assure Prince Talleyrand of my devotion, and to tell him what reception you had at my hands." I merely answered, "*Je ferai mon devoir*"—I'll do my duty—for I *could* not give him a promise of the kind.

The schooner *Collector* appeared, a few days later, off the harbor, and then left with my dispatches for Vera Cruz, whence I, in a very short time, received the satisfactory intelligence, that the Viceroy had paid the heavy bill. I then took my seal from the packet in the Consolidation Bureau, and gave the German an appropriate *douceur*. Forty-four years have rolled away since then, but I have never been fortunate enough to remember the name of that friendly man. He was a Rhinelander, however.

Since the Messrs. Hope, in accordance with the arrangements made between them and Ouvrard, which, as the reader will remember, were transferred to the French treasury, had to pay three francs and seventy-five centimes for every dollar received and demanded, the \$700,000 payable at Havana were estimated

at 2,625,000 francs. Through my arrangements, another payment in Vera Cruz was now substituted for this one, and, at the rate just given, a clear profit of 918,750 francs was secured. I was really gratified at being the means of putting so much money into the pockets of my patrons at Amsterdam. How this business finally resulted, remains for my readers to learn in the further course of this narrative.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE SHIPWRECK.

Shipwreck off the coast of Florida, on the Carysfort Reef—My sojourn in the village of Nassau on the Island of New Providence, one of the Bahama group—Return to the United States—Arrival in Philadelphia.

THERE existed no necessity of an immediate return to Philadelphia, as the embargo laid upon all shipping by the American Government had reduced commerce, particularly the export trade of the United States, to a stand-still. I might have awaited a better season of the year for my voyage back to the States, yet, however much my sojourn in Havana pleased me, I still felt an inward anxiety for more agreeable circumstances than those which there surrounded me. Yankee supercargoes and ship-captains did not satisfy my need of daily conversation, and my heart too was not altogether an uninterested party to the desire I felt for an early return to Philadelphia. One vessel bound for Charleston, and two for Baltimore, offered me the chance of passage home. One of the latter was the schooner *Independence*, a real "clipper," and the other was a strong-built schooner called the "*Merchant*." I bespoke my passage in the latter, with a young Englishman called Creighton, an agent for the New York house of Murray & Sons. We were to sail on the 18th of January, 1808, and our baggage was on board, but we were detained, by contrary winds, until January 25th, on which day several good ships, that had arrived in the meanwhile, and had already taken in cargo, put to sea with us. We should not believe in omens; and to allow ourselves to be governed by them I have ever regarded as great folly; yet, that at certain moments of our lives

a dark foreshadowing of some misfortune, or some great annoyance that is impending, rises within us, I experienced twice in the same year. At the moment when I went on board of the clipper *Merchant* an inner-voice spoke to me, as if to say that I had done wrong in not selecting the schooner *Independence*.

It was noon when we made sail. Violent northeast winds had hindered our departure. Even upon the occurrence of these northern storms, when the sea breaks over the lofty Moro Castle, perched as it is upon rocks, the waters inside of the fortress in the bay that forms the harbor of Havana are but slightly agitated. The sudden change from the latter to the towering billows of the Gulf Stream often upsets even seamen, as frequently happens likewise in the British Channel when sailing out of Dover. My travelling companions and I were attacked with violent seasickness, and driven to our beds, when we had hardly turned our backs upon the fort. On the next day, it blew a gale from the south-east, which tossed us to and fro: our sea-sickness was past, but partly for want of appetite or any desire to move, and partly through sheer indolence, we lay dozing on our mattresses. That night, about eleven o'clock, I was awakened by a dreadfully severe concussion, and almost thrown out of my berth. The sudden cessation of the ship's motion and a still more violent jolt left me no further doubt that we had struck. I shouted to my travelling comrade, Creighton, and my faithful negro, Celestin, to come on deck. Now followed three concussions, so violent that I could scarcely keep my feet, and at the same moment, the ship lay over on her beam ends. "Where is the captain?" I asked of the man at the helm. "He is asleep!" was the answer. I shouted into the cabin which was already filling with water: "Captain Murphy! Captain Murphy!" No reply! "Where is the mate, then?" was my next question. "Up there by the forecastle!" was the reply. I now felt an arm, which I seized. It was the captain, who stumbled out of his cabin, yawning, and as I afterwards learned, had been drinking all the evening with the mate. I had scarcely made the captain understand the full extent of our danger, when, still laboring under the effects of his carouse and sudden alarm, he began, as if totally deprived of his senses, to bellow

forth an incoherent jumble of commands. We had been five minutes in this situation, before a single sail was taken in. The schooner was careening over more and more, and was already half under water. A couple of sailors had been lucky enough, in this general confusion, to find the axe, and we hoped, that by cutting away the masts, we should be able to right the ship again; but the axe proved useless, and the wind extinguished our only lantern.

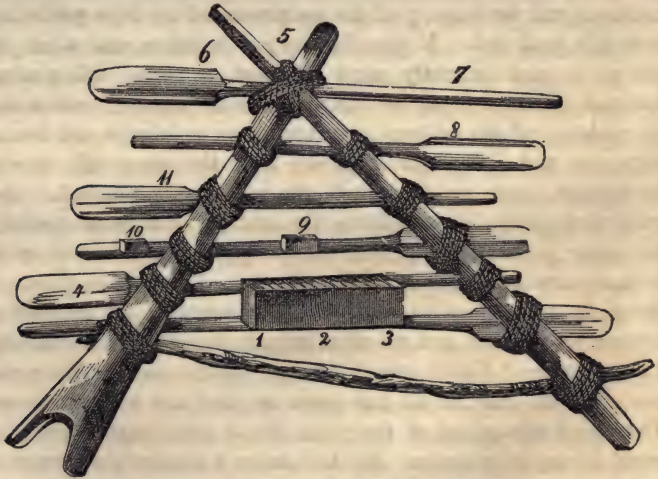
It was time to take to the boat, and, after great exertions, we managed to get it loose from the tackle that secured it to the deck, and launch it. The constant cracking of our craft made us fear that it was going to pieces. How we succeeded in getting a keg of ship's biscuit, the compass and the Captain's quadrant into the long boat, is now incomprehensible to me. Four sailors leaped into the boat and went to work bailing out the water that dashed in furiously over the breakers. My colored man had, with great effort, worked his way into the cabin which was half under water, and, heaven only knows how, seized my wearing apparel, (for I was in little more than my shirt,) my watch and my writing-desk, in which, as he well knew, I kept papers of great value and importance. I could not open this secretary, for where was the key? So I threw it into the long-boat where my travelling-friend had managed to put his also, and then laid hold of a rope to swing himself down after it, when suddenly the tackle that held the boat to our vessel parted, and the little craft, with the four sailors in it, was swept away from us. A couple of minutes afterwards, we heard the words: "We are aground! we shall perish!" and then the howling of the tempest and the roar of the sea was the only sound in our ears. The jolly-boat was still left hanging from the stern davits, over the rudder. That might save us! It took us but an instant to lower it; but it had hardly touched the water before the waves had dashed it to pieces against the stern. We had now but one hope of escape left—the construction of a serviceable raft. Desperate as the attempt seemed, we still managed to get together a couple of spare spars and oars, and tackle to fasten them, when suddenly the foremast went crashing over the side, carrying away our half-completed



work with it in its fall. The ship now sank deeper than before, and in such a position that the starboard side was perpendicularly above the larboard. Little more than the iron railings of the quarter deck and the mainmast was still visible above the raging breakers. In this helpless condition, all we could do was to lash ourselves fast on the iron railings to which we had been clinging, and there await the worst with resignation. It is easy to comprehend that we looked forward to nothing but a watery grave. To think of rescue was but folly. And yet, how plainly the consoling voice of hope spoke within me! The feeling to which I allude, surpasses all attempt at description! It lasted scarcely for seconds—yet what seconds! My travelling companions, the drunken sot Murphy, and even most of the sailors, seemed to be completely prostrated under the burthen of our hard fate. I too, was, after all, not in much better plight; yet, when I put every thing together, I can ascribe my greater fortitude only to the idea which would not leave me, that we should be saved. The billows broke continuously over us; and we were expecting, from minute to minute, that we should be torn from our hold and hurled into the raging sea. We had already been clinging to the railings for four mortal hours, when the storm began to subside a little, and we suddenly heard the voice of one of our sailors who had been carried off in the long-boat. An instant afterwards, we heard the voices of the other two. A ray of hope now revived our half lifeless frames. Nothing could seem more certain to us than that the four seamen were returning to rescue us from our dreadful situation; but this, alas! was not the case. The long-boat had not held out but a little while against the fury of the breakers. It had sunk, carrying down with it one of the sailors, a negro, who could not swim. The others had saved themselves, partly by swimming and partly by clinging to some protruding ledges of the rocks, until they, at length, succeeded in getting hold of the foremast, and by means of it and the broken cordage, had finally reached a last desperate shelter on our wreck. Eleven men were now clinging to one frail railing, buried under the rushing onset of the billows, and looking forward, from moment to moment, to their doom. At this time there was, indeed, but

little further room for hope, and the few minutes we could command from our stunned and breathless condition, were given up to gloomy reflections. Now and then a star gleamed, for an instant, through the masses of black clouds, and how gladly we hailed in it the harbinger of morning.

At length, about seven o'clock, after we had been hanging for almost eight hours to the railings, the storm-clouds parted and we could descry, away at the distance of some nine miles, a narrow black streak on the horizon; this we instantly knew to be land. A nameless feeling of delight ran through every vein, but immediately the thought, how impossible it was to reach the shore, made us again despond. The fierce billows still beat over us, and although the wind moderated, the sea continued in the most violent agitation. It may have been about eight o'clock in the morning, when we, all at once, detected a sail in the Gulf Stream. It seemed to be approaching us, until we at length recognized it to



be the brig which had left Havana in company with our own vessel. Our sensations, as it came nearer and nearer, then suddenly tacked, and completely withdrew from our sight, may be imagined.

That our schooner had not gone to pieces long ere this, and that the feeble railing still withstood the weight of twelve human beings, was a wonder upon whose prolongation we could not count for any great while to come, so we resolved to renew our attempt to make a raft, and actually succeeded in constructing one in about an hour and a-half. It was composed of nine pieces, viz: the fore-gaff, two spars, and six larger and smaller oars, as represented in the drawing:

Nos. 1, 2, 3, represent the chicken-coop, to which the captain, Mr. Creighton, and I, were lashed.

No. 4, the place where my colored man had fastened himself.

No. 5, the place where the sailor, Jack, stood with his legs stretched apart, for foothold.

Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, the places where the sailors fixed themselves, most of them in a standing posture.

This, as is plainly to be seen, was a miserably frail concern, to bear the weight of twelve men, but we could get no more wooden material, and the beating of the sea prevented us from perfecting even this weak raft. It was loosely put together, and when we got on it, sank instantly, some two feet or more. Most of us fastened ourselves firmly to our seats, for the rocking motion and the violence of the billows that tossed us rudely to and fro, as they rose and fell, would assuredly have thrown us off. It was ten o'clock, when we finally left the wreck upon this raft. The wind, fortunately, blew towards the land, or all hope of reaching the latter would have abandoned us. Our raft did not keep in its horizontal position one single moment. It sank sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left; the mounting sea frequently covered us entirely, and we often enough prepared ourselves with a murmured—"Now! now!" for our last moment. We could not steer the raft, at all, but went as wind and wave drove us. The sailor who stood at the point No. 5, was the only one who could do anything for us. He had taken a blanket and spread it out between his extended arms, in such a way as to catch the wind, with a remark that made me smile at the time.

"This," said he, "is the first sail that would need no reef!"

The aid this rendered us was scarcely perceptible, and the



reader may judge how slow our progress was, when he learns that at four o'clock in the afternoon, we were only half way between the shore and our wreck, which still held together. About five o'clock we saw three small sail coming towards us from the extreme point of the land. The distance at which they were from us rendered it impossible for us to attract their attention, and, if we shouted to them, it was more from despair than for any reason. It was with the greatest risk that we loosened the oar No. 8, attached the red neckcloth of a sailor to it, and held it aloft; but all this was of no more use than our shouting. We were neither heard nor seen. By this time, our raft was nearly three feet under water. Meanwhile the sea had become less agitated, and, although we were up to our breasts in water, our heads were not so often washed by the billows. By sundown, that is to say about six o'clock, we reckoned that we were yet some three miles and a half from the land. We supposed the latter to be the coast of East Florida, off which lies a small island. The ebb tide was now altogether against us, and the wind, too, suddenly shifted and blew directly from the land. We all expected to be driven out again to sea; and, with heavy hearts took our last look at the setting sun. The small sails which we had seen about five o'clock, seemed to have approached near to our abandoned wreck, then just visible to us by the mast sticking out of the water, and to have cast anchor in its close neighborhood. It was, at this moment, difficult indeed to hold fast to the doctrine of "all is for the best!"

The heavy swell which again began to rise made every attempt to steer our raft with the loosened oar utterly useless, and the outspread blanket was of no farther use to us as the wind was blowing off the land. Night came on; some of our company had cramps in their limbs, and others were completely exhausted by the exertions their perilous position on the raft required. It is truly impossible to form a correct idea of our situation. An hour later, we were about three musket shots distant from the little island, which, as we afterwards learned, was called *Tavernier Key*. Here, we saw through the twilight, a wreck, and, as we thought, a brigantine and a large sloop both at anchor, but without a

human being on board. The island appeared to be uninhabited. We made several attempts to reach it, but they were all fruitless, for the swell continually drove us back, and at length forced us down along the land, which we had at first taken for the coast of Florida, but which proved to be another island called *Large Key*. Fortunately, the western point of this larger island turned, the nearer we came to it, almost like a half moon, southward, and received the flood of the sea in a sort of bay, so that about ten o'clock in the evening, we were pretty near to the land. We measured with our steering oar, and found the depth of water not over four feet. Upon this, the sailor Jack, who had stood at No. 5, left his place and leaped into the sea; another, a German by birth, followed him, and these two men, the strongest, and consequently, the least exhausted among us, drew our shattered raft to the shore, which we, God be thanked! at length reached in safety, a little after eleven o'clock. Some of the sailors, and my faithful negro Celestin, were so exhausted that they could not leave the raft, and had to be carried ashore, one after the other. The mate and a couple of sailors scarcely reached it, ere they fell almost lifeless on the beach. My colored man seized my hand, and had just breath enough left to stammer out, as he kissed it: "Oh, master, if I had lost you!" when he dropped to the ground, stiff with cold. I took him up in my arms and strove to warm him, for I had already learned from experience, that the colored race are unfitted to encounter the severities of cold. A sailor had tinder in his pocket, but it had got completely wet, and what we, at this moment, would have preferred to all the splendors of the world, a real good fire, we could not procure. The shore was sandy or rocky, here and there covered with some dry thistles, and formed but a hard, uninviting bed. Yet it was land—FIRM LAND—upon which we stood. This thought overcame every other in the minds of both Creighton and myself, and unable to resist the weight of our fatigue and desire to sleep, we sank down, utterly worn out. We all lay in a heap together, and tried to warm each other. I had kept hold of my faithful negro, and succeeded in restoring him to consciousness within a couple of hours. During the night, we were refreshed in another way. Some heavy rain clouds burst

above us, and would have dispensed a most delightful coolness to our prostrate frames, had we needed it. The sun had scarcely risen, when, to our inexpressible delight, we saw three small wrecker boats at anchor between Large Key and Tavernier Key. The distance was great, yet these craft by no means seemed to be beyond our reach. There was yet another trial before us. We were just rising from the beach to try whether we could not get nearer to these boats, when they suddenly weighed anchor and put to sea. Two of them returned about an hour afterwards, and ranged up near the sloop which we had seen on the previous evening. We now resolved to lose no time, but push on until we could get opposite to these boats, at a point from which we thought we could hail them. We commenced our journey, but were so completely exhausted by hunger, but more especially thirst, and the many fatigues we had undergone, that we had to rest every five minutes. Some of us had our legs swollen, and I, like most of the party, was barefooted. We found ourselves without any nourishment, as we had saved only two bottles of wine, as a restorative for eleven persons, and there was not a dry stitch on one of us. Mr. Creighton and I were worse off than the rest, for it was the fourth day since we had taken any food, and our tramp of three miles, along the shore, contributed no little to our greater exhaustion. We had, at length, reached a point opposite to the wrecker-boats. On the strand lay a ten foot pole. To this we fastened a red flannel sailor's shirt, and hoisted it, in the hope that the people on board of the boats would see us and hasten to our relief. We could distinguish them plainly—even see the smoke on their decks!—they, surely, must notice us or hear our shouts! and yet they did not appear to get a glimpse of us nor to pay the least attention to our repeated hallooing. Three of our companions in misfortune had traversed the island in all directions, in search of fresh water and bananas. They found neither one nor the other, and came back utterly dispirited. Hunger was gnawing our vitals, and the fear of dying by starvation increased in proportion as our appetites grew keener; for our complete exhaustion had deadened every other feeling within



us. We all felt that it would be a physical impossibility for us to survive another day in our present condition.

It might have been about two o'clock in the afternoon, when Mr. Creighton and I offered a sailor fifty dollars and a new outfit, if he would swim to one or the other of the two boats, and inform their people of our situation. Jack, the same man, who had on the previous day, held the blanket for ten hours on his outstretched arms, undertook the desperate task. The distance was not full three sea-miles. I need hardly describe the longing anxiety with which our gaze followed him. We despaired more and more of his success, the farther he got from us, for we observed that the swell incessantly beat him back, and that he seemed to be tired out. His head was scarcely any longer visible above the water—only now and then we could just see a little speck on the surface of the billows, for an instant at a time. At length, this too suddenly disappeared. "Poor Jack!" thought we, "he is gone!" But no!—look!—There was Jack on board of the sloop, shouting to the people of the boats. We next saw a couple of men going to him, and taking him on board of their craft in a small skiff. They then rowed towards the spot where we were. What we all felt could not be described by the most experienced pen, and only they could realize it who have been placed in a similar situation. The skiff, small as it was, took us all and conveyed us to one of the two vessels—a craft of about eighteen tons. We there got some nourishment, and learned that we were on board of a wrecker-boat belonging to New Providence, one of the English Bahama Islands, that it was manned by four seamen and was lying off the Florida coast, in this direction to catch sea turtle. They partly lived on this and partly on provisions found in the vessels that stranded there from time to time. These were English West-India mariners. The skipper who owned the craft confessed that he had seen us on shore quite distinctly, the whole morning, but had pretended that he did not, and under the persuasion that we were shipwrecked Spaniards, who, after having been rescued, would lay violent hands on his craft and carry her away to Cuba, as had occurred not long before to some of their comrades, would assuredly have turned a deaf

ear to our cries, had not Jack's arrival given him a different idea of what we were. The rocks on which our vessel had been cast away, formed the *Carysfort Reef*, on which the English frigate *Carysfort* was totally lost with all on board, in the year 1774.

The remainder of this narrative is soon told. We distributed ourselves on three small craft, and after we had (owing to contrary winds which detained us) cruised in and out along the Florida coast, and among the islands, catching turtles occasionally, we made for Nassau, the seaport of New Providence, where we arrived on the 6th of February, the eleventh day after our shipwreck. I landed barefooted, and attired in a pair of pantaloons manufactured out of sail-cloth for me by our deliverers. The Solicitor-General, a Mr. Armstrong, who recollected my name from the circumstance, that a ship, bound from New Orleans to Liverpool, on board of which were 30,000 piastres, sent by me to England, had stopped and been examined at New Providence, and who had, moreover, known Creighton's family in England at an earlier period, provided us with money. We had to wait a fortnight for an opportunity to embark for the United States, since the embargo in American ports had broken off the usual frequency of communications with the West Indies. At length, on the 22d of February, we got on board a vessel for Charleston, whither a favorable wind brought us in four days. We took Jack along with us, after giving him the new outfit and the fifty dollars we had promised him. Before we left the Florida coast we had employed the delay occasioned us by contrary winds to look about among the rocks for some of our lost effects, and had found the long boat that was swept away; it still contained the body of the drowned sailor, who, fastened to his seat, had there found his death, and breathed out his last on a sack containing about six hundred dollars. We also got some twenty casks of coffee, forty boxes of sugar, and \$1,600 in silver coin, from the wreck of the schooner; my trunk was there too, but everything had been washed out of it excepting a few shirts and my copying-book. My writing-desk, with \$2,000 in silver, and all my papers, were irrevocably lost. From Charleston, my companions and I went overland to Philadelphia, where we arrived on the 11th of March.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE EMBARGO OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE YEAR 1808.

Rupture of communications with Mexico ; the first and most important cause which influenced the independent position of Parish, and became the source of his first embarrassments—The large purchase of lands on the St. Lawrence river was one of the next—History of this purchase—Gouverneur Morris and Le Ray de Chaumont were the originators of Parish's blindness, and the first to sell property of such diminutive value—Parish obtains permission from Gallatin, the Secretary of State, notwithstanding the embargo, to dispatch ships in ballast, and bring silver dollars from Mexico—The use made of this favor by John Jacob Astor, of New York—His history—Stephen Girard, in Philadelphia—Girard's history and career—Fracture of my right leg at Wilmington—I employ the retirement, rendered necessary by this accident, to strike off the first balance of our great operation.

UPON my arrival I found David Parish in great tribulation. The embargo suddenly imposed, in the beginning of the year, by the Congress of the United States, a measure intended to suspend all intercourse with Great Britain for the time being, until an understanding had been come to with the latter power in relation to many disputed questions, such as the Right of Search, and the taking away of English sailors out of American ships, &c., &c., was exactly calculated to produce considerable embarrassment in the conduct of our business. Very important sums were still lying in Vera Cruz and Mexico, and the departure of the clippers for their transportation to the United States was rendered absolutely impossible by the embargo. Again, large stocks of goods intended to be shipped to Europe, and on which Parish had made very heavy advances, were locked up in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. The whole machine was brought to a stand still. Its regular progress was consequently interrupted, and, on the



part of Messrs. Hope & Co., some signs of impatience were beginning to grow visible, on account of certain delayed remittances. This delay had been partly, if not altogether, occasioned by some circumstances which can only be attributed to the deviations Parish had seen fit to make from the regular course of the business intrusted to him, and which led to a cash outlay of more than three quarters of a million dollars. I may perhaps be permitted to mention only one of these circumstances, which had not been foreseen or counted upon in Europe, as it will give my readers a knowledge of the origin of a colossal landed estate, now become the property of the Parish family, and situated on the north-western frontiers of the State of New York, and watered by the river St. Lawrence.

Among the old friends of the Parish family in the beginning of this century was counted Mr. Gouverneur Morris, so celebrated as the American Ambassador at the Court of Versailles. He was a clear-headed and talented man; he had visited Hamburg, and spent some time there with Mr. John Parish, then Consul for the United States in that city. He had returned to his own country, and was living on his estate, called Morrisania, on the East river, fifteen miles from New York. From there he visited David Parish, on the latter's invitation, in Philadelphia, during the spring of 1807, and spent a couple of weeks with him. Upon this occasion he succeeded in getting from his host some \$30,000 on bond and mortgage on his possessions lying along the St. Lawrence river. Some months later, after his return to Morrisania, Mr. Gouverneur Morris wrote a pamphlet on the present value of landed property on the north-western frontiers of New York, and the gradual prospective increase of the same, and dedicated this effusion of his pen to his friend David Parish. At the same time the latter received an invitation to go on a visit with Mr. Morris to these valuable tracts of land in the autumn of the same year. This was also done. Soon afterwards, Gouverneur Morris again visited his friend Parish in Philadelphia, where the former lifted his mortgage by the sale of the whole property, at the rate of two dollars an acre, Parish paying down an additional sum of \$20,000.

In the fall of 1808 Parish once more visited the shores of the

St. Lawrence, and bought about 100,000 acres, at the average price of two dollars an acre, from a Frenchman named Le Ray de Chaumont, who had been settled there for many years, and from one of the branches of the Ogden family, and their representative David B. Ogden, one of the first lawyers in New York, the whole borough of Ogdensburgh, now the seat of Mr. George Parish, the second son of the Mr. Richard Parish at present residing in Niensteden, for about \$9,000. The new owner thereupon commenced operations, by going to work to import three thousand merino sheep from Spain, so as to make use of a large part of the locality, which was pretty well known to consist of soil in the highest degree unproductive, and chiefly covered with stones or rocks, but, as Le Ray de Chaumont and consorts explained to Parish, was an exact repetition of the Spanish district where the merino sheep yield the most perfect wool. Parish was so possessed with this idea, that upon a little excursion we made together, on the way to Baltimore, to purchase a pair of horses, as we passed by a stretch of stony land, and saw some merino sheep skipping about over it, he exclaimed to me, in great glee, "Look! look there, Nolte! how they jump about! they yield splendid wool!"

I am writing down this narrative chiefly as extracted from my memory, after the lapse of forty-four years, and consequently cannot, so far as the accuracy of numbers is concerned, set down all with the closest precision; but what I can affirm is, that the whole amount expended by Parish for this purpose, up to the spring of 1809, was close upon \$363,000. The reader will find the assurance of this in the subsequent pages.

Of the two other causes of Parish's sudden deficiency of funds, in the very middle of the superabundance justly represented by him previously, to the firm in Amsterdam, I shall, in a few words, touch upon that one only which resulted from the failing condition of the house of Guest & Banker, importers, in Philadelphia. Parish had discounted their acceptances to the amount of \$70,000, and *en-portefeuille*: and since the combination that was made, in order to save this capital, would not essentially contribute to the better understanding of the then existing state of affairs, I suppress it in this place, not however without taking occasion to remark, that it

only yields a proof the more of the elastic nature of mercantile consciences in general, and of the resources possessed by a deeply calculating mind, fruitful in expedients, but that before the tribunal of strict morality, it could hardly receive an unconditional absolution.

Messrs. Hope & Co. were counting upon important remittances, when, all at once, they received drafts from David Parish for a very considerable sum, which had been raised by him for his relief when his own cash box had become exhausted. The protest designated the cause of the refused acceptance in the words, "On account of not having been notified"; the bills, however, were paid.

When, fifteen months later, I was conversing about this circumstance with Mr. P. C. Labouchère, and remarked, with regret, that it had been calculated to damage Parish's position, he replied, "I only wanted to remind Parish that he is not the unconditional master to make use of our funds just as he may see fit, but nothing more than a mere partner, in a certain business, under well understood conditions. We intended to pay the bills any how."

The embargo made itself doubly felt, not only through the impossibility of shipping off the enormous stocks of goods upon which Parish had made advances, and which he held under lock and key, but also through the no less absolute impossibility of dispatching the fast sailing schooners to Vera Cruz, to bring away the ready coin deposited there. Parish, however, understood the means of remedying this evil. He repaired to Washington, had an interview with Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury—a man distinguished for his intelligence and experience—and convinced him, that even if the policy of the government required that the exportation of American products should be prevented by an embargo, it still could not possibly be a wise course to take from the United States the means of bringing home, from foreign countries, the sums due to them in silver, and that with this latter view, and for this purpose, it would be an excellent measure to permit the departure of vessels in ballast. The Secretary of the Treasury saw the force of this reasoning, and at once, upon his own responsibility, gave the collectors of the different



Atlantic ports full authority to allow the departure of such vessels. In this way the outstanding sums expected from Mexico at length arrived, and towards the close of the same summer Villanueva, who had also accomplished his mission, left his late residence at Vera Cruz, and came, under his real name, Lestapis, to the States, where he took up his temporary abode, at Germantown, five miles from Philadelphia.

The argument which Parish had made use of with Mr. Gallatin, for the purpose of procuring permission to send out ships in ballast, to bring back sums of money from abroad that were due in the United States, had found favor in the eyes of a man who had distinguished himself from the mass of German immigrants by his important successes, his speculative spirit, and his great wealth, and had won a certain celebrity. This man was John Jacob Astor, the founder of the American colony of Astoria, on the northern coast of the Pacific ocean, which has been so graphically and picturesquely described by the pen of Washington Irving. Astor was born at Heidelberg, where the original name of his family is said to have been Aschthor, and had come to New York as a furrier's apprentice. His first savings, that is to say, the wages he got in the peltry warehouse, for beating out and preparing bear, doe, and other skins, he invested in the purchase of all kinds of peltry, bear, mink, and rabbit skins, which he got from the Indians, who at that time wandered about the streets of New York; and so soon as he had collected a certain quantity, he sent them to Europe, particularly to the Leipsic fair. There he traded them off for Nuremburg wares, cheap knives, glass beads, and other articles adapted to traffic with the Indians on the Canadian frontiers, and took them himself to the latter points, where he again exchanged them for furs of various kinds. As he has often told me, with his own lips, he carried on this traffic untiringly for twelve long years, going in person, alternately, to the Canadian frontiers, and then to the Leipsic fair, and lived all the while, as he had ever been accustomed to do, humbly and sparingly. At length he had managed to bring together a considerable capital, and gradually became a freighter of ships, and fitted out expeditions to the Northwest Coast, to trade with the Indians

of Nootka Sound for furs. Another circumstance contributed to the increase of his means. At the peace concluded in 1783, between England and her revolted provinces, the thirteen United States, many acres of land in the State of New York, some even in the neighborhood of New York city, were voted by Congress to the German soldiers who had fought in the American army. The latter were chiefly Hessians and Darmstadters. Most of them died in the course of the year, without having succeeded in converting this property into money ; but the relatives and heirs they left behind them in Germany did not forget these little inheritances. Upon the occasion of a visit made by Astor to Heidelberg, in later years, most of the parties last referred to, as inheriting the allotments of the deceased German soldiers, and residing in Heidelberg, united and made our friend their legally authorized attorney, in order to realize something, if possible, from their hitherto useless acres. But the hoped for increase of the value of this property was, on the whole, rather slow in coming, and the heirs wanted money, money, quick and ready MONEY. Astor having been applied to on this score, told them that, in order to get ready money, they must reckon up the real present value of the cash itself, and not any imagined value of the land, and that only through pretty considerable sacrifice could they get cash for the same. Thereupon the parties advised with each other, and finally Astor received peremptory orders to sell, without further delay. Unknown speculators were found; the proceeds were small, but the heirs got what they wanted—money. At the present day, many of these pieces of ground are among the most valuable and most important in the city, and have gradually passed through Astor into other hands: the unknown speculators, however, have faded from the memory of everybody.

Astor, at the moment of the embargo, was in the possession of several millions, so that he was able to give his son, William B. Astor, who was educated at Göttingen, the magnificent hotel on Broadway called the "Astor House," which cost the sum of \$800,000.

The permission (procured by Parish) to send out ships in ballast, to bring home silver, had given Astor the idea that the same

privilege might be extended to vessels dispatched for the purpose of bringing home the amount of debts due abroad, in goods. With this view he went to Washington, and there, under the pretence that he had an important depôt of teas at Canton, obtained the desired permission to send a vessel thither in ballast. This step, however, was only the forerunner of another one. Astor, in reality, owned no depôt of teas at Canton, and hence it simply came to this, that he would, according to the usual custom, send money thither to purchase the article.

The exceptional favor of sending schooners in ballast to Vera Cruz, which Parish had up to this time enjoyed, but which was now gradually extended to other vessels, whose destination was not to bring back gold and silver values, but goods on American account, sufficiently showed that, under certain circumstances, there was no indisposition to grant free exit to ships in ballast for a particular object. And now arose another point, namely, whether empty vessels, which, however, had silver on board, could be regarded as in ballast. The precious metals are, in most countries, not looked upon as wares, although in some they are so classified. It was not exactly advisable to bring on a discussion of the question, whether the exportation of silver in otherwise unladen vessels should depend upon it or not. The query was, whether a foreign creditor, who had come to collect the moneys owed him by American merchants, would be permitted to take the funds really thus received back with him. In Washington, there appeared to be every disposition to allow this. Now it was well known, in the northern ports of the United States, that the leading native merchants of Canton had never hesitated to accord their regular correspondents, returning year out and year in, from the United States, certain credits which amounted to considerable sums. Upon this Astor based his plan. He hunted up, among the Chinese sailors, or Lascars, on the ships lately arriving from China, a fellow suited to his purpose, dressed him as a Mandarin, and took him with him to Washington, where he had to play the part of the Chinese creditor, under the name of Hong-Qua, or Kina-Holu. No one dreamed of suspecting the Mandarin's identity, and Astor pushed his scheme safely through. The \$200,000



he sent to Canton were expended there in tea and other Chinese articles, and within a year afterwards returned in that shape to Astor's hands, and were used by him to excellent account. A stroke of skill had been achieved, whose morality no one in the United States doubted for a moment.

Astor has left a fortune of about \$12,000,000, chiefly to his only son. His mind was incessantly busied with the increase of his resources, and had no other direction. He was compelled, by a physical infirmity, to repair to Paris, where he could avail himself of the skilful assistance of Baron Dupuytren. The latter thoroughly restored him, and advised him to ride out every day. He frequently took occasion himself to accompany his patient on these rides. One day—and this anecdote I have from the Baron's own mouth—when riding, he appeared by no means disposed to converse; not a word could be got out of him: and at length Dupuytren declared, that he must be suffering from some secret pain or trouble, when he would not speak. He pressed him, and worried him, until finally Astor loosed his tongue—"Look ye! Baron!" he said; "How frightful this is! I have here, in the hands of my banker, at Paris, about 2,000,000 francs, and cannot manage, without great effort, to get more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum on it. Now, this very day I have received a letter from my son in New York, informing me that there the best acceptances are at from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 per cent. per month. Is it not enough to enrage a man?"

I cannot let this opportunity slip by without saying something about another mercantile celebrity of the United States, viz.: Stephen Girard. This man was born in a village near the banks of the Garonne. He was the son of a peasant, and had left his own country as a common sailor. Having gradually risen to the post of second mate, he came as such to Philadelphia, where he remained, and opened a tavern on the banks of the Delaware for such of his countrymen as were engaged in the West India trade, particularly that with St. Domingo. The revolution in St. Domingo caused an emigration which continually brought him fresh customers, and, having built some small vessels to bring his fugitive countrymen away in safety from the island, he bartered

flour and meal for coffee, until his capital, which had been scarcely worth mentioning at first, gradually increased, and enabled him to build larger vessels, and extend his spirit of enterprise in all directions. His frugality bordered on avarice. Sailors' fare was to him the best, and the freighting of vessels his favorite pursuit. The success which attended his exertions at length became unexampled; for he never had his ships insured, but always chose skilful and experienced Captains, thus saving himself the heavy expense of taking out insurance policies, and continued acting on this principle, gradually increasing his capital, more and more, until it had finally swelled to an enormous amount. Illiterate, as a French common sailor must needs be, and scarcely able to write his own name, he called all his ships after the great authors of his native country, and thus enjoyed the sensation of beholding the American flag waving above a *Montesquieu*, a *Voltaire*, a *Helvetius*, and a *Jean Jacques Rousseau*. His ships, which he was in the habit of sending successively to the island of Mauritius, at that time the Isle de France, to Calcutta, and Canton, and each of which cost from forty to sixty thousand dollars, brought back cargoes worth from one to two hundred thousand dollars to Philadelphia, and thence to Europe, particularly to Messrs. Hope & Co., at Amsterdam, and were never insured. Remarkable good fortune attended all these enterprises. Until the year 1815, not one of his ships was ever lost or captured. It will be easy to form an idea of the amount of capital accumulated by this saving of insurance premiums, when one reflects that the latter went as high as from ten to fifteen, and even twenty per cent.

Girard's right hand was a countryman of his, named Roberjeot, who, however, had received his mercantile education entirely at Hamburgh, under the tutelage of Professor Büsch. This Roberjeot was the only man whom he now and then, but no oftener than now and then, took into his especial confidence, and he had worked in the house of Girard, for a respectable, yet very moderate salary, during the lapse of twenty years; frequently something was said about increasing it, but nothing of the sort was ever done. Roberjeot, who had some desire to be taken care of in his old age, resolved to let his patron know that if he desired

to keep him any longer, he must take that matter into serious consideration, and give him a handsome sum, that he might put aside and turn to good account. Girard, a little nettled by this, replied that he would give him ten thousand dollars, but Roberjeot demanded sixty. He was told to wait until the next day, when, without hearing another word in relation to the matter, he received what he had asked for—Sixty Thousand Dollars.

Magnanimous as Girard could be in many things, he was, on the other hand, equally petty in many others. Of his numerous relatives in France, who were all poor peasant folks, he would never hear a syllable mentioned. When some of them, upon one occasion, ventured to cross the ocean, and visit him in Philadelphia, he immediately sent them away again, with a trifling present. In one particular instance, he exhibited unusual hard-heartedness. His captains had received the strictest orders not to bring either strange goods, passengers or letters back with them. One of his ships was returning from Bordeaux, and through another, which had hurried on before it, he learned that it was conveying him some relations of his as passengers; he instantly sent to New-castle, on the Delaware, where the ships coming in from sea usually touch, an order to the Captain, forbidding him to land any passengers, but to remain at that point until another had been procured to take them back to Bordeaux, when he might come up to Philadelphia with his cargo. The Captain was then replaced by another person. He, however, made an exception in favor of two nieces, the orphaned daughters of a brother who had died in poverty. He allowed these girls to come to him, and gave one of them permission, along with some twenty thousand dollars, to marry the brother of General Lallemand, who had emigrated to America upon the restoration of the Bourbons, after the battle of Waterloo. In his will, he bequeathed to the other an equal sum.

He learned a sharp lesson from his favorite correspondents in Europe, Messrs. Hope & Co., of Amsterdam, who possessed his entire confidence. Notwithstanding the reliance he placed in them, he had sent a Quaker, by the name of Hutchinson, to Amsterdam, with explicit instructions to watch those gentlemen



closely, and see that they accounted for the real prices received by them for his consignments, &c., &c. It was a rule, in the house of Messrs. Hope, to compute one-eighth per cent. more than the daily noted rate of exchange, when sending the regular receipts to bank, and this was done to cover a variety of minute office expenses, which could not be brought into a stated account. Thus, for instance: Mr. Hutchinson was informed that they had sold a thousand bags of coffee, from the cargo of the ship *Voltaire*, at so and so much per cent. Hereupon, that gentleman came, next day, to the counting-room, and interrupted Mr. Labouchère in his meditations, and, running his finger along the printed price-current he held in his hand, pointed out to him that the rate must be put at one-eighth per cent. less. The oft-repeated hints Mr. Labouchère had given the young Quaker, who invariably came in with his hat on his head, and, without permission, marched directly up to the door, and pushed on into the private counting-room—the sanctum sanctorum of Dutch merchants—had all proved of no avail: at last they got to let him stand there, without paying any attention to what he had to say. He then wrote to Philadelphia to his principal, who dictated, for his benefit, the most offensive letters to Messrs. Hope, which finally decided the latter to let him know at once, that there existed so wide a difference between their ways of doing business and his, and all attempts to teach him better had so signally failed, that, for the sake of their own comfort and tranquillity, they should be compelled to decline any further transactions with him. There then came a kind of apology, a promise to manage differently in future, &c., &c. But the house in Amsterdam remained firm in the resolution they had taken, offering, however, to do him the favor of recommending to him, as his future correspondents, Messrs. Daniel Crommelin & Sons, their neighbors. The astonishment of these latter gentlemen themselves, when the first important consignments began to reach them from Girard, and the surprise of the whole Bourse of Amsterdam; that any one could reject such business as his, requiring no advances, may be readily conceived.

The Messrs. Hope had, after the annexation of Holland to the Empire, withdrawn, or rather had in a measure been compelled

to withdraw, from all trade in goods and wares, since the famous Berlin and Milan decrees of Napoleon had thrown great difficulties in the way of trade, and much impaired the security of commercial intercourse. However, when, after the fall of Napoleon, in 1814, Holland again obtained her independence, and the house of Messrs. Hope, having been established on a new basis, resumed its former rank, Girard was anxious to renew the connexion which had been interrupted for several years. Upon this occasion the assurance was once more given, that the style of correspondence to be carried on between the two houses should be altogether changed. But Mr. Labouchère was not accustomed to alter his tone. He took the pen in his own hand, and replied to the desire expressed by Mr. Girard, with the regret that he could not consent, feeling convinced that the latter gentleman might indeed reform his language, but not his principles, and that hence the best course would be to regard the acquaintance as having terminated.

Mr. Jerome Sillem, who had just entered the firm of Messrs. Hope, objected, that this was going too far; he had, personally, nothing against Girard, and so lucrative a business as his was not to be wantonly thrown away. Mr. Labouchère, unhesitatingly replied, that even if he (Mr. Sillem) had nothing to say against Girard, the house of Hope was not, on that account, bound to change its views, or relinquish anything of its dignity, and that he (Sillem) enjoyed the advantage of an admission into the firm only under the condition that he would sustain its well-known principles. In a private conversation that soon afterwards occurred, between Mr. Labouchère and myself, I could not avoid remarking, that I was inclined to agree with Mr. Sillem, since Girard had, to some extent, apologized, &c., &c. I now give his reply, so as to leave no gap in my characteristic sketch of this remarkable man. He said to me, "You may rest assured, Mr. Nolte, that this refusal will do the house of Hope more honor, and, by its result, eventually, more good, than all it could have gained from these fine transactions with Mr. Girard." Hereupon I turned the subject, and kept my own opinion to myself, with the conviction that the honorable part of this refusal could not be anywhere

denied; but that, in regard to its effects upon the trading community in the United States, Mr. Labouchère was indulging an illusion, if he were really expressing his true opinion, which, by the way, I had no reason to doubt.

Girard also belonged to the list of the best American correspondents of the Barings, in London; and when one of the head partners of that house, Francis Baring, the second son of Lord Ashburton, visited Philadelphia, his birthplace, in the year 1818, he called at the counting-room of Mr. Girard, whom he, however, did not find there at the time. Mr. Roberjeot, the already-mentioned oldest clerk in that establishment, told him, that if he wanted to see Mr. Girard himself, he must visit him early in the morning, at his large farm, in the neighborhood of the city. Baring went to the place indicated, asked for Mr. Girard, and received the reply, "Yonder he stands!" They pointed out to him a small, low-set man, of about sixty, with gray hair, bare-headed, without coat or jacket, and in his shirt-sleeves, rolled up above the elbows, who stood with a hay-fork in his hand, helping to load hay on a farm-wagon. He said, "Is that Mr. Girard?" "Yes," they answered; whereupon he stepped up to him, and gave his name. "So, so!" remarked Girard; "then you are the son of the man that got married here? Well, now, I am very glad to see you, but I have no time to talk with you at present; it is harvest-time, and I have a great deal to do. There, walk around yonder a little, look at my cows, and get some of the folks to give you a glass of milk, for you can't get such milk in all London!" Mr. Girard was perfectly right. The London milk is notoriously the vilest beverage in the world that bears the name. Baring complied with this blunt invitation; and as he himself was an eccentric, and, consequently, liked eccentrics, he was wonderfully tickled with the thought of what a curious reception this was, for one of the heads of the first house in London to meet with, at the hands of one who stood at the head of the first house in America.

I will now return, after making a leap of some ten years, to the summer of 1808, that is to say, to the time when Parish was waiting for his merino sheep, and hoped to gather in the first-fruits of his newly purchased lands.



I had left him in Baltimore, and had returned, by way of Havre de Grace, on the banks of the Susquehanna river, through Wilmington, to Philadelphia. I had there seen a horse excellently suited to drive in *tandem* with the one that drew my gig. The next day I inspected him, and concluded what I considered a lucky bargain, in purchasing him. The result, however, proved anything but fortunate for me. I had driven to the top of Brandywine Hill, when my new horse took fright, and dashed off at a gallop, the second one following him down the hill, rearing and plunging with his fore and hind legs, until, near the bridge that crosses the Delaware, his head-gearings gave way, and he stumbled and fell. At this moment I leaped from the gig and broke my right leg, so that my foot hung to it only by the skin. In this condition I remained prostrate on the road, where my colored man, whom I had caused to alight to bring the leader back into the right road, when he first became unruly, at length ran up to my assistance, and called some people around us. They then made me a litter, and carried me to the nearest public house in Wilmington. The good people of the tavern, in their first alarm, hastily summoned the two best surgeons in the place, namely, a doctor Smith and a doctor James Tilton,\* a couple of very unskilful and inexperienced persons, notwithstanding their great reputation. These two men stood at the head of the political parties of their village; Dr. Smith as a thorough-going Federalist, and Dr. Tilton as a great admirer of Jefferson, and consequently a democrat. They had not for a long time exchanged a word with each other, but had mutually cherished a most hearty hatred, and were now, by chance, brought together at the foot of my bed, in a little room of a very miserable tavern. These two men, who had for a long series of years lived in hostility with each other, and had never been able to agree, in regard to matters of civil and local government, were, upon this occasion, of the same mind, in relation to one point, which had particular reference to myself,

\* Four years afterwards, when the war with England began, this man was appointed head surgeon of all the field hospitals, but betrayed such incapacity that he had to be dismissed. The American government-organ of that period referred to this dismissal, and gave the reasons for it.

and which, consequently, interested me to the last degree. After they had turned my leg over and over, and examined it, they concluded that, as the dog-days were drawing on, and the extreme heat would, in their opinion, produce lockjaw, and place my life in danger, my leg must be amputated. When they informed me of this decision, and immediately began to prepare for the operation, I declared to them that I would not submit to it in any case, and that they must run the risk of resetting my limb, come of it what would. This latter course was adopted as I requested, but the operation was conducted in very unskilful style, and according to the old fashion, with the use of splints and bandages. On the second day after the bandaging, my pain was so excessive, that I looked about me earnestly for some means of procuring alleviation and assistance. All at once a well-known face appeared in my chamber; it was a Hamburgher, the son of a French teacher of languages, called Virchaux, whom I recollected to have often seen in Hamburgh. On his way to Baltimore, where he was engaged to be married to a Miss Proctor, he had stopped at the inn for refreshment, and was told what had happened, by the people in the house. His curiosity, excited by the remark that the gentleman was from Europe, had induced him to make a personal visit to the bedside of the sufferer. He at once declared himself ready to hasten back to Philadelphia, and apply, on my behalf, to Messrs. Willing & Francis, for a few lines from them to Dr. Physic, the most celebrated surgeon in the United States, requesting him to come at once to my aid. But the time of this distinguished man was so constantly occupied that he could not comply. However, he sent me, instead, his experienced and skilful nephew, Dr. Dorsey, whom I saw the same evening. As I had expected, he at once discovered the folly of the two Wilmington surgeons, freed me from my bandages, and went over the operation of setting my limb a second time. My suffering was great. When he had finished the painful task, he said to me, "I promise you the preservation of your limb, and can also warrant that it will be pretty straight and serviceable; but since the inflammation has been so extreme, that it would be out of the question to expect the bones to reunite, I cannot promise you that you

will be altogether free from a limp." He visited me frequently; according to the usual rate of fees, every visit beyond the limits of the city entitled the physicians and surgeons of Philadelphia to one dollar per mile; and, as Wilmington is twenty-eight miles from Philadelphia, every mile cost me that many dollars. I lay upon my solitary bed at Wilmington no less than forty-two days. On the sixth Mr. Parish visited me, as he was returning from Baltimore to Philadelphia. He soon again left the latter city, on a trip to his property near the St. Lawrence, after having made every arrangement for my reception, so soon as I had got through the probationary period at Wilmington, and could be transferred from that place. On the forty-third day, about six o'clock in the morning, I was removed, and carried on my bed to the deck of the so-styled Newcastle packet, on board of which I reached Philadelphia about ten the same evening, and half an hour later was installed in the rooms prepared for me at the boarding-house of a Mr. White, the first establishment of the kind in that city. There I was cheered by the visits of many friends, and by the best society, native and foreign, that Philadelphia could boast. Little by little I became able to move about on crutches, and at length felt completely re-established.

In October Parish returned, accompanied by General Moreau, whom he entertained at his house, and whom I, upon this occasion, had an opportunity of knowing. I found him a mild and affable, but, mentally, taking him all in all, a very ordinary and quite uninteresting man. His manners were simple, and possessed a naturalness which was attractive; but the attention of his hearers was not enchained or fixed by his conversation, or rather his monologue, for it very rarely came to a dialogue of any length, and you could listen to him with interest only when he discoursed about his really very remarkable and distinguished military adventures; you could then listen to him with great pleasure. Napoleon he almost invariably called "*Le tyran*"—the tyrant.

Parish himself was not in the most agreeable mood; without being exactly bound to do so, he had usually shown me his correspondence with the Amsterdam house, that is to say, the letters



received from it, but, now he was much more reserved in that respect. Lestapis, who, as I have already stated, lived in German-town, came but seldom to the city to hear whatever news might be afloat; but, as I resided in the immediate neighborhood of Parish, I visited him and his counting-room almost daily. One morning he called me into his room and said, "The gentlemen in Amsterdam appear to be getting somewhat impatient; they would like to see an exhibit of the whole, and to make out one is no easy affair, although the materials are all at hand. Will you look over the papers and tell me what you think of them?" I very willingly complied, and after I had formed a pretty good idea of the work, I offered my services in making out the provisional balance sheet required. The total amount of the whole transaction ran up to no less than thirty-three millions of Spanish dollars. I at once went to work, took all the books and papers that could be spared home with me, and labored from the middle of October, 1808, until the beginning of March, in the following year. The person whom I procured to copy the manifold accounts, and the papers of my general exhibit was my young friend, Virchaux, who had visited me in Wilmington, and who did not find himself comfortably situated in the clerkship he then held in a quaker house. I advised him not to give up his place then, but to devote to me all the time he could spare. When Parish had carefully examined the exhibit, he found it sufficient and quite satisfactory to his wishes. Directly afterwards he made the proposition to me, to take it myself to Europe, and hand it over to Messrs. Baring and Mr. J. Williams Hope, in London, and then hasten to Amsterdam to Mr. Labouchère, who, he said, appeared to be waiting for me with great impatience. This impatience had partly been occasioned by the business I had concluded at Havana. Owing to my shipwreck, the embargo, and certain delays on the part of Parish, no direct information regarding this business had reached the Messrs. Hope, but they had heard of it indirectly, through a channel of which no one would have dreamed. The reader will remember that at the time of my taking leave of the Intendant at Havana, the latter had especially requested me to let Talleyrand, his protector and friend, hear of the excellent

reception that had been extended to me by him. This could not have been sufficient to set his mind at ease, for he had taken advantage of a Spanish vessel bound for St. Sebastian, to pay his compliments to the Prince, and to write to him what he had done to further the business that had brought him thither, and how it had been concluded; all this, he added, *out of a special regard for the interest of the Prince*. At a time when the whole coast of Cuba was closely watched by the numerous English cruisers, and the Spanish coasts along the Bay of Biscay, still more sharply observed, the successful departure of a Spanish ship from the harbor of Havana, and its safe arrival in the ports of St. Sebastian or Bilboa, was something bordering almost on impossibility; but in the case of the vessel which bore the letter of the Intendant to Prince Talleyrand, every thing went smoothly, and the Prince received the missive. Mr. Labouchère, who happened to be in Paris, just at the time of its arrival, was questioned in regard to it, but knew nothing more about it than that I had taken the bill for 700,000 dollars to Havana to get it cashed. The Prince found himself, under the altered state of things, obliged to communicate the whole history of the affair to Count Mollien, the Minister of the Public Treasury, and the latter could compute the amount that Messrs. Hope & Co. must gain by the exchange of bills, as well as I could. He thereupon laid claim to a portion of this profit, and Mr. Labouchère remained on the defensive until he should have further intelligence from me. Upon my departure from Philadelphia, Parish gave me very particular directions not to lose sight of his desire to keep the lands he had purchased, on his account, and should the opportunity occur during the examination of my statements, to play my cards so well, that no difficulty should occur in this respect. From the disposition he manifested, frequently to make various pretences, I inferred that he began to rue his purchase, and that he was desirous of once more getting rid of the greater part of it. In the sequel it will appear that I was mistaken, and that Parish returned from Europe with the most far-reaching projects in regard to his new possessions.

## CHAPTER IX.

### MY TRIP TO EUROPE IN THE MONTH OF APRIL, 1809.

Return to Europe in the month of April, 1809, for the purpose of taking over the first balance-sheet—Arrival at Falmouth—Stay there, in consequence of the Alien Act—Visit of Mr. John Parish, at Cheltenham—His outward appearance on the Bathers' promenade—My first visit to the House of the Barings—Visit to Mr. Henry Hope, the oldest head of the Amsterdam House—Sir Francis Baring—The London firm, Baring, Brothers and Co.—First meeting with Mr. Alexander Baring—Journey to Holland, by way of Helgoland—Journey to Paris—Meeting there with Mr. P. C. Labouchère, who makes me personally acquainted with Ouvrard—An anecdote of the latter—The pins—New plans of Ouvrard, which are overthrown by the battle of Wagram and its consequences—Return to Amsterdam, by way of Brussels—My sickness in Amsterdam during the winter—Return to Hamburg, in the spring of 1810—Family circumstances.

ON the 5th of April, 1809, I went from New York, in the English packet ship "Prince Adolphus," bound first to Halifax, in Nova Scotia, and thence to Falmouth. On this return to Europe I could not quote Schiller's words, "And homeward beats the gentle marching time of peace!" for war was then raging, serious and bitter war. We had strong evidence of this, as we were approaching the English coasts. Once, in the night-time, and once, just as we had seated ourselves at table, we heard the captain's voice above us ring out the thrilling order, "All hands on deck!" Upon both occasions it was supposed that we were in the immediate neighborhood of a small French sloop-of-war, and resistance to the last extreme was Captain Boulderson's determination; but fortunately these had been false alarms, and no danger was encountered. The voyage from Halifax to the offings of Falmouth



was accomplished in nine days ; but just in sight of the harbor a contrary wind arose, and we were compelled, to our great annoyance, to beat about nine days longer. At length, on the nineteenth day after our departure from Halifax, we disembarked, in excellent health and spirits, notwithstanding the tears of a sentimental American lady, who began to repeat, and kept repeating, the words, "Oh, the land of my forefathers !"

At the time of my arrival in England the "Alien Act" was in full force, and no stranger was permitted to pass into the interior of the country, unless he could obtain a permit from the Alien Office ; and at that period nine days were required for the receipt of the reply to an application for such a permit from London, and the application itself had to be made by a responsible householder. So soon as I had received my passport I set out for London, by way of Bath, in order to fulfil the promise I had made to my friend David, that I would, immediately after my arrival, call upon his father, and give him the latest verbal intelligence of his son. I, however, did not find Mr. John Parish in Bath ; he had gone to Cheltenham, whither I immediately followed him, and there met him on the Bathers' promenade. I immediately recognized him ; for his habit of attracting the attention of every one around him, by something or other singular, had not been laid aside in England, and hence his appearance at once marked him out amid the throng. He wore a little velvet cap, trimmed with fur, cocked over one ear, a velvet coat, in Polish style, with long wide sleeves and gold-worked braid, and a long Turkish pipe in his right hand ; and in his left a silken leash, in which he held two little skittish poodle dogs, completed the costume of this old Scotchman, who had for several years been a resident of Ham-burgh. After I had satisfied his curiosity in regard to his son, and had replied to his questions, I hastened away to London, with the promise of speedily repeating my visit, and, on the morning after my arrival in the great city, I repaired to the Messrs. Barings', whose firm was at that time styled Sir Francis Baring, Bart. & Co. I found in their counting-room only the eldest son-in-law of the chief, a Mr. Charles Wall, the brother-in-law of Mr. P. C. Labouchère, and there temporarily deposited my papers, ac-

counts, and documents. My second visit was to the two Messrs. Hope, namely, to the eldest, the already named chief of the Amsterdam firm, Mr. Henry Hope, and the husband of his niece, John Williams Hope, who both lived together in Cavendish Square. I finally called upon my father's early friend, Sir Francis Baring, who received me with great cordiality, was prepared for my arrival, and asked me a host of questions, in regard to my operations in Mexico. Having already been applied to on the subject by the Messrs. Hope, he told me that I might hold my papers at the disposition of his son Alexander, and then, after careful consultation and examination of the same, they would decide what further was to be done, and keep me advised of the result.

I will take this opportunity of saying something about the Baring family, particularly its most distinguished members, Sir Francis, and his second son, Alexander, as well as the honorable chief of the Amsterdam house, Mr. Henry Hope, whom I have already named. The last of these, when I first made his acquaintance, had reached his seventieth year, and was somewhat deaf. He had never been married. It was he who opened the way for the autocratic power of Russia, under the Empress Catharine II., to the confidence of the then wealthiest capitalists in Europe, the Dutch, and thereby laid the foundation of Russian credit. Always treated by the Empress with great distinction, he had been honored with the gift, from her own hand, of her portrait, the full size of life. This picture occupied the place of honor in the superb gallery of paintings fitted up by him in his palace "t' Huys ten Bosch" (now a royal pleasure-palace), which he had built in the wood of Harlem. Upon his emigration to England, he had taken this splendid gallery, entirely composed of cabinet-pieces, with him, and I had the pleasure of seeing it frequently, at his residence in Cavendish Square. To the tone of a refined gentleman and man of the world he united a certain amiable affability which spoke to and won every heart. The whole-souled cordiality with which he always met me, when I came to his dwelling in the city, or to his country-seat, East Sheen, in the neighborhood of Richmond, has always remained fresh in my memory. Yet a

secret trouble seemed to be weighing on his mind. This annoyance arose from the notorious relations of his niece, Madam Williams Hope, with a Dutch officer of dragoons, by the name of Dopff. I had attracted his confidence, and he one day seized me suddenly by the hand, led me to the window, and could not restrain his tears, as he told me that he must close the door of his house against her, if she ventured to bring this man with her to England. The larger part of his considerable fortune, which he had bequeathed to Henry, the eldest son of this niece, and who died unmarried, passed, at the decease of the latter, to Adrian, the second son, who left no male heirs, but from whom it descended to Francis, the third son, born several years afterwards. This third inheritor is the rich and well known Mr. Hope, now settled in Paris, and the only surviving member of that branch of the whole family.

\* A close examination into the origin of the Baring family traces it back to a certain Peter Baring, who lived in the years from 1660 to 1670, at Gröningen, in the Dutch province of Overysse. One of his ancestors, under the name of Francis Baring, was pastor of the Lutheran church at Bremen, and in that capacity was called to London, where, among others, he had a son named John. The latter, well acquainted with cloth-making, settled at Larkbeer, in Devonshire, and there put up an establishment for the manufacture of that article. He had five children—four sons, John, Thomas, Francis, Charles, and a daughter, called Elizabeth. Two of these sons, John and Francis, established themselves, under the firm of John & Francis Baring, at London, originally with a view of facilitating their father's trade in disposing of his goods, and so as to be in a position to import the raw material to be required, such as wool, dye-stuffs, &c., themselves directly from abroad. Thus was established the house which—after the with-

\* I have communicated a portion of the following particulars, in an article entitled "Alexander Baring, the first Lord Ashburton, and the Baring House," in the "Deutschen Freihafen," of the year 1848, in No. 24, issued June 11th. In a number of the Hamburg "Freischützen," which came out a few days later, the editor of that sheet did not hesitate to make use of the greater part of that article, without crediting the paper in which it was originally published.



drawal of the elder brother John, who retired to Exeter—gradually, under the firm-name of Francis Baring & Co., and eventually, under the firm-name of Baring, Brothers & Co., rose to the highest rank of mercantile eminence in the commerce of the world.

Sir Francis, who, under the Ministry of the Lord Shelburne, father of the present Marquis of Lansdowne, had become his intimate friend and adviser in financial matters, having, in the year 1793, received the title of Baronet, was already styled by the latter the Prince of Merchants. He had become somewhat feeble, and very deaf, when I first got personally acquainted with him. On the occasion of one of my visits to him, he told me that he had kept at his business for thirty years before he considered himself entitled to keep an equipage. Upon another occasion, when I spoke to him of my project in establishing myself in New Orleans, after the termination of my mission, he remarked, "Usually, my young friend, that commission business is the best in which the commissions take this direction"—here he made a motion with his hands, as if throwing something towards him—"but where the business goes thus!"—motioning as if he was throwing something from him—"it wants a sharp eye." This amounted to saying, in other words, that receiving consignments was a better business than executing commissions.

Three of his sons, Thomas, Alexander, and Henry, entered the London establishment; but the first, who was intended to have carried on the father's name, after the death of the latter, on the 12th of September, 1810, assumed the name of Sir Thomas, and withdrew from the house, as the third also found occasion to do at a later period. The latter was passionately fond of play, and indulged in it with so much success, that he several times broke "*L'entreprise Générale Des Jeux*," of Paris. But the sight of one of the heads of such a house, one night after another, in the great gambling establishments, produced a bad effect; and even if it did not impair his credit, it in no slight degree damaged his respectability. This was felt at head-quarters, and an understanding was come to for his withdrawal from the firm.

Alexander Baring, the second son of Sir Francis, had received a portion of his education in Hanau, had then completed it in England, and commenced his mercantile career in the house of Messrs.

Hope, where a friendship sprung up between him and Mr. P. C. Labouchère, which led to the latter's marriage, at a later period, with his sister, Maria Baring. When the Messrs. Hope retired to England, in consequence of the occupation of Holland by the revolutionary French army, under Pichegrüe, and after Alexander Baring had left the House, he determined to visit the United States of North America. At his departure, his father confined his advice to two especial recommendations, one of which was to purchase no uncultivated land, and the other not to marry a wife there: "Because," said he, "uncultivated lands can be more readily bought than sold again; and a wife is best suited to the home in which she was raised, and cannot be formed or trained a second time." However, Alexander had not passed one year in the United States before he forgot both branches of his father's advice. Not only did he purchase large tracts of land, in the western part of the State of Pennsylvania, and lay out a not inconsiderable capital (\$100,000 at least) in the then District and now State of Maine, and that too under the annexed condition of bringing a number of settlers thither within a certain term of years, but also, in 1798, when just twenty-four years of age, he married Anna, the eldest daughter of Mr. William Bingham, in Philadelphia, who was at that time considered the richest man in the United States, and was then a member of the Senate. The inheritance he had to thank her for, at the death of her father, amounted to \$900,000. She bore him nine children, of which seven are still living. The eldest of these, called William Bingham, after his grandfather, is the present Lord Ashburton, and has reached the age of fifty-three. His wife is a Lady Sandwich, and their marriage has remained childless. After his death, his title, along with the greater part of his fortune, will pass to the second son, Francis, who is married to a daughter of the Duke Bassano, a former State Secretary of Napoleon. This gentleman usually resides at Paris, and is the eldest head of the London house, in the management of whose business, however, he seldom takes any active part. He has two sons. The favorite from the first, of his father and mother, both title and fortune will pass entirely, according to their wishes, into the hands of him who in their eyes deserved the preference.

About a week after I had handed in my papers, at the Barings' counting-house, I received a very friendly invitation from Mr. Alexander Baring, to meet him at a certain hour, on an appointed day, in his office in Bishopsgate-street. There it was that I for the first time saw this merchant, who had already become so distinguished, and where I had the good fortune to completely win his confidence, in a few brief interviews. The repeated proofs which he has given me, since this commencement of our acquaintance, during a long lifetime, the hearty cordiality with which he has always received me, and his special preference, with which he clung to me, belong to the most agreeable recollections of my career, and in my days of trial I have never looked back upon them without a sense of supreme gratification, that refreshed and steeled my courage for new struggles. The first hour and a half of our conversation was devoted to a verbal review and analysis of the whole Mexican business, of whose details Messrs. Baring knew just as little as did the Messrs. Hope, and of whose results those gentlemen, collectively and undeniably, could judge only by the sums returned and accounted for to them. After I had served as his pioneer through this labyrinth of calculations, he folded up the papers together, for the purpose of studying them over, and promised that within a few days he would again have an interview with me concerning them, and undertake an examination of the present posture of the affair. In the course of our conversation he suddenly asked, "What do you think of David Parish?" This made me stammer, and I hesitated in my reply. He then said, "You may speak out without hesitation; whatever you may think fit to say shall go no farther, but I want to have your opinion." I replied, "My opinion is of little value, but since you wish me to speak, I shall say that Mr. Parish shows more ability in getting out of scrapes than in avoiding them." "Ah!" said he, "I see; you allude to the affair of Guest & Bancker. Let me tell you that I did not like it at all; and, to tell the truth, it has had a most unfavorable and painful effect upon my mind. Here let the matter rest!"

Upon our next interview, after he had made himself fully acquainted with the subject, I brought forward the question of the



land purchases made by Parish. The moneys paid out for them, up to the middle of March, amounted, according to the calculations I had brought along, to the sum of \$363,000. "Why," he remarked, "Parish must have been very sanguine about the matter, to have laid out so much money upon an experiment." My reply was, that Parish considered it such a splendid operation, that he did not wish to give up any of it, but desired to keep it all on his own account. "He is welcome to it!" he rejoined; "he may keep them all! As to ourselves, we have more lands than we know what to do with; and I do not think Labouchère would wish to meddle with them; it is not in his way." It was upon this occasion that he related to me the anecdote of his father's advice, at the time of his departure for the United States. Thus all that Parish had desired was as good as accomplished.

From the hands of Alexander Baring my papers passed into the hands of his father, Sir Francis Baring, who also invited me to see him, for the purpose of explaining to him some points which he had not fully understood at first. These related to the capital arising from the assumption, by Parish, of the guaranty respecting the duties at twenty per cent. This amounted to more than \$2,000,000, and, in the settlement of accounts between him and Oliver and other houses, was always deducted and retained by him. A short explanation sufficed to render this quite clear, and thereupon he sent the papers to Mr. Williams Hope, with the declaration, that thus far all had been plain enough to him to let him "see land," as he expressed it. Mr. Williams Hope, whose head could not stand any further strain, took—as he should have done, at any rate—Sir Francis at his word, and expressed the wish that I would hasten to Mr. Labouchère with all due speed. As the Messrs. Baring kept up a communication with Amsterdam, through Vliessingen, by means of fishing boats, in order to arrive there sooner, I was going to take one of these; but Mr. Williams Hope thought that all kinds of difficulties might spring up in my path when I landed in Holland, and that, owing to the fact of my not being familiar with the Dutch language, they would be more than I could manage, my papers would be taken away from me, &c., &c., so I must go to Helgoland, at that time the centre of

the contraband trade with the north of Germany. He was of the opinion that I should be able to make through, and reach Amsterdam more easily, in that direction. "It matters little," he would very coolly remark, "about your personal safety; the papers are the thing, they must be safe. The rest is not worth one minute's consideration!" He was not altogether wrong in the main, but I cannot say that I felt greatly flattered at the egotistic carelessness with which he very unhesitatingly spoke of my person. He had a repulsive exterior, and pure egotism was visible in every line and feature of his countenance.

At last, upon these recommendations, I set out, by way of Harwich, for Helgoland, where I met with a number of Hamburgers of my former acquaintance; for instance, Mr. Charles Parish, David's younger brother, who there, in the rendezvous of all the smugglers to the main land, exhibited his especial fitness for the part of a mercantile matado, among his companions and participants in this not very reputable trade—a real *hors d'œuvre* for a regular merchant—and displayed his inborn tendency, "a trancher du grand Seigneur," by carrying on even this commerce on the most extensive scale. I also met Nicholas, the fugitive English Consul from Hamburg, in Helgoland, where he went about as he had done at Hamburg, with his oblique, that is to say, strongly squinting glance, treading on everybody's toes, and then excusing himself with the words, "No offence!" Yet not alone from Hamburg, but from every part of the surrounding coasts, and from the banks of the Elbe and Weser, smugglers had assembled on the island.

A bark laden with coffee, conveyed me to the Weser, and landed me there before daybreak, close to a little village situated near the shore. I there procured a horse and wagon, and proceeded on my way to Amsterdam. I reached the latter city on the fourth day after my disembarkation, but found no manager in the counting-house, excepting an elderly Englishman named Dixon, who informed me that Mr. Labouchère was waiting for me in Paris, and that I must at once repair thither to him. On the same day I received my regular passport, and leaving Amsterdam at ten on that same evening, reached Paris on the fourth day,

almost in a dream, for I had been kept away for seven nights without lying down upon a bed. Mr. Labouchère was still at Nantes, but they were expecting him within three days, at the Hotel de l'Empire, where I also alighted. This establishment, at that time the best house of the kind in Paris, stood at the corner of the *Rue Cerutti* and the *Rue de Provence*, and was the very same building which Mr. James Laffitte purchased and lived in a few years later. Three days afterwards, Mr. Labouchère arrived, was heartily glad to see me, and was by no means sparing in his praise. But he could not conceal a great deal of irritation against Parish. The affair that seemed to affect him the most unpleasantly was, the lawsuit Parish had carried on in Philadelphia, with a certain Sarmiento, a Teneriffe man by birth, who had settled there, and who, through intrigues at Madrid, had found the means of coming out against Parish, with an appearance of right, in the name of the Spanish Government, and undertaking to make him responsible for duties withheld on the sale of cargoes sent to Vera Cruz. When Sarmiento came forward with this demand, the sole and most natural defence of Parish was, that he, as the agent of Messrs. Hope & Co. in Amsterdam, could not be held personally responsible; and that, in case Sarmiento or the Spanish Government really were entitled to ask for anything, they had only to look to Messrs. Hope, and not to any one who was conducting business merely in their name. That Parish was but an agent, and had acted under instructions, was evident from his contract; and not the American, but the Dutch courts were the forum in which the question could be discussed. But the inborn vanity of Parish would not allow him to confine himself to this simple course. At the head of so many millions, throwing money about in all directions, wherever he was applied to to relieve a mercantile necessity, he seemed to have become a much more important personage in the United States than the President himself. He was gratified at feeling himself the omnipotent Jupiter of the American money-market, and it would have gone hard with him to relinquish even a grade of this position. This it undoubtedly was that caused him to adopt the wrong course, and go through with a suit, which led to public scandal, and the farcical procedure



of citing King Charles IV. to appear as a witness against David Parish.

The question of the lands promised to terminate without any difficulty. Mr. Labouchère, upon his part, also regarded this colossal purchase as a thing apart, which did not at all belong to the range of business undertaken by the firm, and which bore upon its face the character of a private speculation of Mr. Parish.

After Mr. Labouchère had propounded several questions, touching the negotiation conducted at Havana, he informed me that he had to bring the business to a conclusion with Count Mollien, and would introduce me to the latter. This he did. The Count, who wore spectacles, eyed me over them while Mr. Labouchère was talking to him, and at length addressed me with some flattering words upon my success. A few days later, Mr. Labouchère informed me that he had concluded the affair with the Minister. "I have been obliged to make a bungling job of it," were his words, "and share the profits; but you have not been forgotten, you shall get your portion." Sure enough, I some weeks afterwards received a notification from the Minister, that, in accordance with the Imperial order, the sum of 45,817 francs was at my disposal, as an acknowledgment of the service I had rendered the Public Treasury.

My American mission could now be regarded as at an end; at least so long as Parish had not returned from the United States. I wanted to visit my parents and relatives in Hamburgh, but Mr. Labouchère held me back. He had some fresh business for me, he said, and I should hear all about it in a few days. As we were lodging at the same hotel, we met daily, usually in the morning, but also often in the evening, after his return from parties, or from the opera, or theatres.

One morning Mr. Labouchère sent for me to come to him, and when I appeared, presented me to Mr. Ouvrard, whose personal acquaintance I had long wished to form, as he very well knew. The refined tone, the affability and winning manners of this gentleman, pleased me extremely. He expressed himself with rare fluency, and in the choicest language, upon every subject that was brought forward, and at the same time exhibited the clearness of

his views in striking sentences, and words full of meaning, when the topic called for them. He never remained at fault for an answer, and, where the truth denied him the elements of a direct reply, his inventive mind always opened for him a middle road between fiction and reality. He gave me a convincing proof of his especial capacity for treading this middle road, when I met him, a few days later, at a dinner-party given by Mr. Labouchère. In the spring of 1809, in one of Napoleon's fits of ill humor, he had been shut up for several weeks at Vincennes, and denied the use of pen, paper and ink, and even of books, during the whole of that time. At the dinner-table, upon the occasion I am now alluding to, Mr. Labouchère asked him how, with such a restless disposition as his, he had managed to pass the time, under such circumstances. Without stopping to think long about his reply, he answered, that what had really puzzled him was to find something to occupy his mind, and, at the same time, some exercise for his body, between four bare walls. "At length I hit upon the right plan," said he; "happening to thrust my hand into one of my coat pockets, I there found a packet of pins. I at once took them out, and, counting them carefully, discovered, like Leporello, in Don Juan, the number to be 1,003. I thereupon took the whole quantity in my hand, and, flinging them around, scattered them into all quarters of the room. I then began the task of picking them up again, until I could produce exactly the same number I held at first. Each time, three, four, five, or even more were missing. These I searched for untiringly until they were found; and many a time have I spent a whole hour in conjecturing where they could have fallen; and then I would pry into every cranny, chink, and hole in the walls, or on the paved floor, and in this way I procured a healthful and uninterrupted course of bodily and mental exercise."

Ouvrard, tired of his long protracted inactivity, and once more in the full possession of his liberty, had, in company with his friend the Duke of Otranto, the Minister of Police, and with the participation of Murat, the King of Naples, struck off a plan which was extremely advantageous to the latter. The negotiation that was opened could proceed only very slowly, since Murat was with

the army, which had an opportunity of resting a little during the armistice intervening between the battle of Essling and the battle of Wagram. The plan was, to procure Murat's signature of a hundred permits, which, drawn up after the model of the Spanish ones, from Don Miguel Cayetano Soler, mentioned neither the tonnage nor the cargo of vessels that were to sail with them from Malta to Naples and Palermo, and there barter for all kinds of Neapolitan commodities, which they were to bring back with them. Mr. Labouchère wanted to send me to Malta with these permits, so soon as the conditions had been complied with which he had laid down for the prosecution of this enterprise. These conditions embraced the deposit of 2,000,000 Neapolitan ducats in the hands of Hope & Co., as guaranty and security for the cargoes of English manufactured goods and other articles that were to be sold, or traded off, in the ports of Naples, for the products of that kingdom. The Duke of Otranto had undertaken to get this sum together. After I had devoted the whole day to amusement, or any occupation that pleased me the most, I was not unfrequently called, at midnight, to Mr. Labouchère, to aid him in all kinds of work relating to the projected enterprise, the Spanish loan, &c.

Meanwhile the battle of Wagram was fought. Napoleon's speedy return was at hand. Murat hesitated to sign the permits, and the Duke of Otranto, of whom, it was well known, that he had ceased to take any important part in the Emperor's confidence, had to recede from his offer to raise the money that was to have guarantied the action of Mr. Labouchère. The latter hereupon made preparations for his return to Amsterdam, and requested me to follow him thither within a few weeks. I complied with his wishes, and arrived in Amsterdam at the time when the King of Holland had begun to entertain the lively hope, that, through the secret negotiations which had for some time been carried on, the basis of a general peace with England would be laid. He had learned to know and appreciate Mr. Labouchère, and had applied to him to open the negotiations. Mr. Labouchère at once informed me of his intended visit to England, without saying a word about its purpose, and gave me a couple of lines to the



Minister of Marine, to be handed him whenever he should summon me to an interview, and communicate his wishes. These lines contained nothing further than that he could place full reliance on me, in every respect, and that I was at the Minister's disposal. A fortnight passed by ; Mr. Labouchère returned suddenly from London, and I then learned, for the first time, that his peace mission had failed. The whole business had been a project, got up by the Duke of Otranto, in order to restore himself in the declining favor of Napoleon, by a striking and unexpected success in England. But when Napoleon, who was just then visiting Antwerp with the young Empress Marie Louise, heard the posture of the negotiation, from his brother Louis, the two names of Ouvrard and Fouché, the first already hateful to his ears, and the latter rapidly becoming so, again brought up before him, he dismissed the latter, and gave the Duke of Rovigo, his successor in the Ministry of Police, directions to have the former arrested, and confined at Vincennes. It was long after this imprisonment that Ouvrard related to me the anecdote I have given above.

About this time a violent catarrhal fever seized me at Amsterdam, and confined me during several weeks to my bed, compelling me to keep my room until the middle of March, 1810. I exchanged frequent letters with my family, who were very impatient to see me again. One letter from my father informed me, that the hard times had greatly impaired his business, and that much money was lying out in goods he was expecting from the Mediterranean Sea, and that the supplies were, to use a mercantile phrase, somewhat tight. He closed with the request, that as he had heard of my great good fortune in America, to send him about 15,000 marks. I replied that I could not, positively, say how large a profit I had made in America, as that would depend upon the yet unconcluded general winding-up of the whole business, to which I had only partially contributed ; but that he could have the 15,000 marks without difficulty, and might look for them within eight or ten days. A month had scarcely passed, after he had received this sum from me, ere I was asked afresh for a second loan of 12,500 marks, and that was likewise sent. At length, having entirely recovered, I received permission from Labouchère

to visit my family at Hamburg, and was speedily in their midst. My good mother had lost all her vivacity, and my father was a good deal bent, and evidently enfeebled. He was, at that time, something more than sixty-nine years of age. After a short time had elapsed, I inquired into the circumstances of the family, and my father, in a *tête-a-tête*, congratulated me on my great success. After he had almost looked upon me as lost, when I left Hamburg, I had been skilful enough to make so considerable a capital, in a few years, that the American Consul, Forbes, had assured him my accumulation must be at least 600,000 marks. "And could you believe it, father?" I asked him; "Really, could you give yourself up to such an idea, and not reflect that you would have received earlier proofs of my wealth, had it been true that I possessed so much?" To this he could make no reply. I had already remarked that there was a considerable admixture of credulity in his character, but that it could go so far, as it did in this instance, I had never supposed. Having returned to my mother, she too spoke of the wealth I had amassed; and just at the same moment a mirror betrayed a certain motion of the head, expressive of denial, which my father, who stood behind me, was making to her, yet she ended her days in the same delusion.

I may here spare my readers the recapitulation of further details, and confine myself to the consequences resulting from this visit to Hamburg. It was not without some trouble that I made my father comprehend, that he could not live by a failing business, and that such was the only kind he could, in those times, hope to have within reach. When he, however, at length, understood this, he finally made up his mind to retire. I advanced the amount of capital that was lacking, for the complete settlement of his business, so as to extinguish all claims. When I had ascertained how much would be required to support a family like his comfortably, in some cheaper place, in Schwerin, or Ratzeburg, for instance, I prevailed upon my father to give up his expensive residence in Hamburg, and to choose one of these places for his future abode, binding myself, if he would do so, to pay in a regular stipend of 6,000 marks. This plan was carried into execution, and my parents went to Schwerin, and then to Ratzeburg, where I

had the pleasure of embracing them both, upon two occasions, once in 1816, and again in 1822, and where they died before fortune had begun to turn her back on me. Heaven be thanked! they never knew of my reverses, or of the long period of suffering through which I had to struggle!



## CHAPTER X.

### THE RETURN TO ENGLAND.

Return to England, to await the arrival of Parish, for the final liquidation of the great operation—This takes place much later than was expected, and the liquidation is not made until June, 1811—Parish is accompanied by me to Antwerp, where I await the result—Unusual profit by the operation—Meeting, in Paris, with Labouchère, Parish, and Le Ray Chaumont; the last busied with new projects for the sale of his lands, never lets Parish out of his sight—Rapid glance at the value of the lands purchased by Parish—Redoubled propositions to houses in Europe—I refuse them—Resolution to return to New Orleans—Preliminary consultations with Mr. Labouchère, and then with Mr. Alexander Baring, at London, in relation to my future establishment at New Orleans—The selection of a companion and future partner in business—My departure from Liverpool for New York, in September, 1811—Arrival there—Continuation of my journey to New Orleans overland, and by means of the western navigation—The flat-boats I build and fit up at Pittsburgh—I follow my companion, who had preceded me, and cross the Alleghany mountains on horseback—My first acquaintance, near the Falls of the Juniata, with Audubon, who afterwards became so celebrated as an ornithologist—My stay at Lexington—Henry Clay—First traces of the earthquake, on the way to Louisville, and then in that city—The earthquake comes on, in the night of February 6, 1812, near New Madrid, beside the Mississippi—Description of my situation—Consequences of the earthquake—Arrival in New Orleans, in March, 1812.

Soon afterwards I returned to England, there to await the arrival of Parish, for the liquidation and settlement of the whole business. Lestapis had already left the United States, a year previously, and had gone with his family to Bordeaux. Parish returned to Europe a good deal later; landed, like myself, at Falmouth, and at once repaired to his father in Cheltenham. Before he set out for London, he invited me to visit him at that place. He wished for information regarding the whole state of

things, and especially with reference to the feeling of Messrs. Hope and Baring. I had already let him know, while he was yet in the United States, that in regard to his lands he would encounter no difficulty. In August, he made up his mind to go, by way of Ostend and Antwerp, to Amsterdam, to wind up affairs with his principals. He expressed the desire that I should accompany him, at least to Antwerp, and there await his return from Amsterdam. I agreed to do this, the more readily as I too wished to bring my plans for the future into some clear light, and place them on a secure basis. Mr. Labouchère had proposed to me to enter the house of his brother at Nantes, in the place of Mr. Troteau, and to marry the only daughter of that wealthy and upright man, since her father, as he told me, would be content with that arrangement, and had meanwhile promised to give her a dower of 150,000 francs, if I were inclined to agree. But Mademoiselle was exactly the reverse of a pretty and agreeable young French lady; vivacity, grace, and cultivation were lacking in an equal degree; and if she would not precisely pass for a simpleton, still one thing was certain, namely, that sensible persons must be very different indeed. I consequently declined the offer. David Parish, who was anxious to return to the United States, now desired to place me at the head of an establishment, that was to be opened in Liverpool, with a capital of £20,000 sterling, and in company with his brother-in-law, Hamilton, from Glasgow, who had married his sister, the widow Charnock. This capital was to be contributed by him, his brothers in Hamburgh, the Messrs. Baring, and myself, in equal sums of £5,000 sterling.

I was desirous of first becoming familiarly acquainted with Mr. Hamilton, before agreeing and pledging myself to this arrangement. After I had learned to know that gentleman, I quickly made up my mind to decline the proposed partnership. The good man possessed no mercantile experience whatever. He had simply been the agent of a London Fire Insurance Company, at Glasgow, had married a widow eight years older than himself, but for all that very attractive and agreeable, and seemed to be a man of weak and undecided character, quite happy and contented under the petticoat government to which he was subjected. Moreover,

I learned, from Mr. Alexander Baring, that he had only promised his participation in the whole plan, because he had been led into the belief, that I had been fully consulted in regard to it, and had approved of the matter. Hence I made my excuses, and declined, so soon as I had learned, from Mr. Baring, that he was quite willing to aid me in the execution of my own project, namely, the establishment of a concern at New Orleans. I had, he thought, made an excellent selection, and such a house, in possession of the confidence of good European houses, must be successful. My refusal displeased Parish, as much as my preceding one had annoyed Mr. Labouchère; but I felt myself sufficiently well sustained in Mr. Alexander Baring's approbation of my project to return to the United States; for he was also of the opinion, that, in either of the cases referred to, it would have been rather a hazardous undertaking to unite with a partner in whom I could feel no confidence.

Parish returned, within fourteen days, from the settlement of his business in Amsterdam. Of the details, I have learned more from him than I knew from personal observation. The lands remained, as he had desired, on his own account. Mr. Labouchère declined his proposal, to divide the half commission, guarantied by Echeverria and Septien, which, as the reader may remember, amounted to \$260,000, between my friend Lestapis and myself, as he thought it dangerous to place young men in possession of so much capital all at once, and because Ouvrard, whom Napoleon's measures had prostrated, had been the originator of the whole business, to which they were indebted for such advantages, and that he had now reappeared on the scene, and consequently was the best entitled to the money. Hereupon the whole sum was presented to him. After the sum of £83,500 had been put aside, with a view to meeting the lawsuit carried on by Sarmiento, and other similar eventualities, the amount of profit remaining in this business was not less than the heavy sum of £778,750 sterling. Mr. Henry Hope, of London, to whom the settlement that had taken place in Amsterdam was communicated, was of the opinion, that the above £83,500 sterling might also be divided, as it was not probable that, particularly after such enormous profits, they should ever, by an unlucky chance, be left without the means



of replacing this sum. The opinion of Mr. Hope met with general approbation, and the whole profit to be divided was set down at £862,250 sterling. In connection with this business there existed, in the hands of Messrs. Hope, a separate book account, which the uninitiated of the office had never been permitted to see. In computing this profit, no reference is made to the gain which flowed in to the Messrs. Hope and Baring alone, without the participation of Parish upon the millions of Spanish dollars which were shipped at Vera Cruz, in English frigates, and brought by them direct to London. Nor must we leave out of sight the great advantages secured by commissions on the sale of the numerous cargoes sent on American account to Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburgh (later Toenningen). According to the instructions given to Parish, the cargoes destined for Hamburgh were to have been sent to the Messrs. Matthieson & Sillem, Hope's own correspondent, but he dispatched them to the house of his brother. Mr. Le Ray de Chaumont, who had sold Parish the greater portion of his newly-acquired lands, and who had been brooding for years over the unproductive portion of them, was now, according to the French proverb, "*L'Appetit vient en mangeant*"—keenly urged by a desire to make further sales. He had followed close at the heels of Parish, and when the latter repaired to Paris, after completing his business at Amsterdam, he also hastened to that capitol. Mr. Labouchère and I were also there at the time. Business had brought the former gentlemen thither, but I had come for no other purpose, than to bid a brief farewell to this my favorite place of sojourn. Soon afterwards Le Ray arrived, to present himself once more with his maps, calculations, and plans. Parish had appointed a dinner, at the then celebrated restaurant of Robert, at which the American land speculator, Mr. Labouchère, his friend Moritz Von Bethmann, from Frankfort, and I, were present. Mr. Le Ray de Chaumont expatiated to such a degree, in relation to the immense prospective advantages connected with these lands, that Mr. Labouchère, who could not fail to see through the whole business, suddenly turned to Parish, and remarked, that he would sooner or later have to rue his heavy purchases of lands. "I think, on the contrary," replied Parish,

"that it will be yourself who will, at least, inevitably regret that you did not also purchase a portion of them." Labouchère was always ready for a repartee, so replied, "I will never regret your success; and the greatest pleasure you would occasion me would be, to prove one day that I have been mistaken. But I am afraid, for your sake, that I will have to adjourn that gratification for some time to come." Mr. Le Ray at once comprehended that his fine projects did not take in this direction, and became silent. When taking my coffee, after dinner, I remarked to Mr. Labouchère, that the whole tenor of his conversation had not been of a nature calculated to gratify or encourage Parish. His reply was, that he always wished to cut short the talk of Mr. Le Ray, and other similar speculators, and to keep his house clear of foolish projects; and, as far as Parish was concerned, he added, "he will only too soon find out that he has committed a piece of folly."

Some people in Europe, particularly in Hamburg, are inclined to ascribe very great value to these lands, on which such enormous sums of money had been expended, and to regard them as mines of wealth. But if any one will only reckon up the capital laid out, and that too at a very moderate estimate—say \$700,000, and the real sum was much more—and then add three per cent. interest, remembering all the while that, during a space of thirty-five years, the property has returned no interest whatever, and scarcely even covered the expenses of keeping it, they will discover that these lands must now be worth, at the least, \$2,000,000. Since the discovery of some veins of iron ore it has, under good management, at least returned some interest; whether the latter amounts to the nett sum of \$60,000, can be known only to the Parish family, into whose hands it fell after David's death; but I cannot suppress the doubt, that it does not reach that sum.

Having at length come to an understanding with Mr. Labouchère, in regard to what his house was disposed to do for me, and in common with the Barings, in case I carried out my design of opening an establishment at New Orleans, I once more went to London. My first visit, of course, was to Mr. Alexander Baring, who, having been already informed by Mr. Labouchère, invited me to visit him in the country, on the ensuing Saturday. He

had a very pleasant villa at Carshalton, where he received me at the appointed time, and where I remained until the next Monday. The hours passed there were spent in a very pleasant manner, but not a moment could be found for an interview respecting the object of my visit—for even in his solitude he was overwhelmed with a thousand matters of importance. At length, before breakfast, on Monday morning, he told me that he would drive into the city in his curriole; and we had scarcely started before he began, in the carriage, and without any opening of the conversation on my part, to express a clear and well-arranged proposition, in relation to the intended support of my plans. This consisted in a capital of £6,000 sterling, advanced for five years, at five per cent., and a blank credit in favor of my business for £10,000 more. It was, at the same time, to be understood, that the two houses of Hope and Baring should be named in my circular, as leading friends and references. In examining an extract from my account with the London house, I found, in addition to the considerable sums due to me on my agency, a round balance of £1,000 sterling, whose source I could not conjecture, placed to my credit. Upon inquiry I learned, that when the final settlement was made in Amsterdam, it had been determined to allow me this bonus, on account of the numerous items of outlay which I might have had in the course of my agency, without making any note of the same. In fact, they had discovered a marked difference between the statement I had made out, of my travelling and sundry expenses, and those of the other gentlemen, which were, one and all, charged against the general enterprise.

I looked about me in London for a capable and active young man, calculated to inspire and retain confidence, and found such a one in a young Livonian, named Edward Hollander, from Riga. My good friend, Frederick W. Brederlow, from the formerly well-known house of Messrs. Joachim Ebel Schmidt & Co., of that city, had specially recommended him to me. In Liverpool I found the same Captain Stirling who had brought me, in the month of July, 1805, in the good ship *Flora*, from Amsterdam to New York, for the first time. Of course I willingly gave him and his new vessel, which he called the *Aristomenes*, the preference



over all the rest then lading for New York, and embarked with my travelling companion, in September, 1811. It was exactly the season of the equinoctial storms, and also the famous year of the great comet, which remained visible for such a length of time, and whose influence, as was afterwards affirmed, beneficially affected the vintage on the Rhine, and the banks of the Garonne. We lost but two masts on that perilous voyage, but safely reached New York after a passage of forty-eight days. I was anxious to acquire some knowledge of the far western regions, whose rich and manifold productions, of all kinds, were carried down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, destined to be the sources of the prosperity of New Orleans, although their banks were then but thinly populated, and were almost entirely wild and unreclaimed. In pursuance of this desire, I resolved to cross the Alleghany mountains to Pittsburgh, in the State of Pennsylvania, and there purchase a couple of flat-boats, in which I and my companion would quietly float down the rapid stream to New Orleans, about 2,000 miles. The only other means usual at that time, for passage or transportation on the two rivers, was by keel-boats, as they are called. These were long narrow barks, which would contain at the farthest about two hundred barrels of flour, and which could complete the journey, by the use of oars, in from thirty to thirty-five days; while the flat-boats, which were only steered, consumed forty or fifty days in making the same distance. The latter, however, were more convenient for the transportation of passengers, since there was space enough on them to put up quite a snug sleeping-room, with beds, &c., and a convenient kitchen and dining-room. I sent my friend Hollander a fortnight in advance of me, to Pittsburgh, to purchase two such flat-boats, one for our own use, and the other to accommodate my horse with a stall. Moreover, we could thus take along with us some four hundred barrels of flour, which could always be disposed of to advantage at New Orleans, and would suffice to pay the expenses of our journey. I managed to procure an excellent horse in Philadelphia, and, with my saddle-bags strapped to his back, I started in December alone, on my way to Pittsburgh. It was very cold. I rode, early one morning, entirely alone, over the loftiest summit

of the Alleghany ridge, called Laurel Hill, and about ten o'clock arrived at a small inn, close by the Falls of the Juniata river. Here I ordered a substantial breakfast. The landlady showed me into a room, and said, I perhaps would not object to taking my meal at the same table with a strange gentleman, who was already there. As I entered I found the latter personage, who at once struck me as being, what, in common parlance, is called an odd fish. He was sitting at a table, before the fire, with a Madras handkerchief wound around his head, exactly in the style of the French mariners, or laborers, in a seaport town. I stepped up to him, and accosted him politely, with the words, "I hope I don't incommode you, by coming to take my breakfast with you." "Oh no, sir," he replied, with a strong French accent, that made it sound like "No, sare." "Ah," I continued, "you are a Frenchman, sir?" "No, sare," he answered, "hi emm an Heenglishman." "Why," I asked, in return, "how do you make that out? You look like a Frenchman, and you speak like one." "Hi emm an Eenglishman, becas hi got a Heenglish wife," he answered. Without investigating the matter further, we made up our minds, at breakfast, to remain in company, and to ride together to Pittsburgh. He showed himself to be an original throughout, but at last admitted that he was a Frenchman by birth, and a native of La Rochelle. However, he had come in his early youth to Louisiana, had grown up in the sea-service, and had gradually become a thorough American. "Now," I asked, "how does that accord with your quality of Englishman?" Upon this he found it convenient to reply, in the French language, "When all is said and done, I am somewhat cosmopolitan; I belong to every country." This man, who afterwards won for himself so great a name in natural history, particularly in ornithology, was Audubon, who, however, was by no means thinking, at that time, of occupying himself with the study of natural history.\*

\* In a third volume of Audubon's great, costly, and now very rare work on "American Ornithology," there is a circumstantial account of our meeting near the Falls of Juniata, and a flattering acknowledgment of the little service I was so fortunate as to have the opportunity of rendering my companion at that time, and afterwards upon the occasion of his journey to England.

He wanted to be a merchant, and had married the daughter of an Englishman, named Bakewell, formerly of Philadelphia, but then residing and owning mills at Shippingport, at the Falls of the Ohio, and in the neighborhood of Louisville. It was also his intention to travel down the Ohio into Kentucky. At Pittsburgh, he found no other opportunity of doing so than the one offered by my flat-boats, and, as he was a good companionable man, and, moreover, an accomplished sketcher, I invited him to take a birth in our cabin gratis. He thankfully accepted the invitation, and we left Pittsburgh, in very cold weather, with the Monongahela and Ohio rivers full of drifting ice, in the beginning of January, 1812. I learned nothing further of his travelling plans until we reached Limestone, a little place at the northwestern corner of the State of Ohio. There we had both our horses taken ashore, and I resolved to go with him overland, at first to visit the capital, Lexington, and from there to Louisville, where he expected to find his wife and his parents-in-law. My two boats, which I had left under the charge of Hollander, were to meet me at the same place. We had scarcely finished our breakfast, at Limestone, when Audubon, all at once, sprang to his feet, and exclaimed, in French, "Now I am going to lay the foundation of my establishment." So saying, he took a small packet of address cards and a hammer from his coat pocket, some nails from his vest, and began to nail up one of the cards to the door of the tavern, where we were taking our meal. The address ran as follows: "*Audubon & Bakewell, Commission Merchants (Pork, Lard, and Flour), New Orleans.*" Oh, oh! thought I, there you have competition before you have got to the place yourself. Yet, as this commission house could not refer to the influential name of the Messrs. Hope, or of Messrs. Baring, and as pork and lard, moreover, were not articles which had any very great attraction for me, in the way of trade, I consoled myself with the thought, that competition of this nature could not amount to much.

From Limestone, Audubon and I rode on together as far as Lexington, the capital of Kentucky. It was then a flourishing little town, where I heard a great deal of talk about a highly-gifted lawyer, who during the elections for members of Congress, had



distinguished himself in the taverns and streets, by all sorts of brawls and fisticuff battles. This man was no other than Henry Clay, whose reputation soon after began to rise so rapidly. He was then a member of Congress ; but his external appearance was by no means calculated to convey any very high idea of his intellectual capacity, although he had, as early as the period of which I speak, already acquired great celebrity as an orator.

A frightfully cruel practice prevailed at that time among the greater part of the rude inhabitants of the western states. It consisted in allowing the finger-nails to grow so long, that, by cutting them, you could give them the form of a small sickle, and this strange weapon was used, in the broils that constantly occurred, to cut out the eyes of the hostile party. This barbarous action was called *gouging*. Upon this excursion through Kentucky I saw several persons who lacked an eye, and others, both of whose eyes were disfigured. The exasperation then reigning throughout the United States, in relation to the difficulties with England, was much greater in the western provinces than along the sea coast, and the feeling was very intense. As I passed through Frankfort, on my way from Lexington to Louisville, I was told that the legislature of Kentucky was just then in session. I resolved to go thither, so that I might compare that body with the sessions of the territorial legislature of Louisiana, which I had had the opportunity of observing in New Orleans, and which was made up of the most singular mixture of native born Americans, and men of French and Spanish extraction. I had scarcely entered the legislative hall, when I heard a very enthusiastic orator dealing forth a violent diatribe against England, with the following words: "We must have war with Great Britain—war will ruin her commerce—commerce is the apple in Britain's eye—there we must *gouge* her !" This flower of oratory was received with great applause ; and, it must be confessed, that for such a population as most of the inhabitants of Kentucky formed at that period, it was extremely well timed, and betrayed a certain poetic sweep of thought. The North Americans in general possess often an unmistakable keenness of perception, which quickly enables them to catch a certain similarity between two altogether different

things. Among them one frequently hears comparisons of the most striking description, from the lips of the most uneducated men. To the happiest of these, which have reached us from the other side of the ocean, perhaps belongs one that was made by the American poet Barlow, the author of the *Columbiad*. Every one who, during his time, understood and spoke the English language, was full of the splendid phraseology of the English orator Burke, who, in his enthusiasm, so often rose to an almost immeasurable height. Barlow, who had heard him, and who had either been unable to follow him in his logical conclusions, or had, as he thought, found no sound argument in what he said, broke out into the exclamation, "He rises like a rocket, spreads a glaring light, and comes down like a stick!"

I was riding alone through the vast forest which separates Frankfort from Louisville, when, all at once, my horse, as if struck by lightning, suddenly stood still—the trees around us had for some seconds exhibited a strange heaving and waving motion. The animal I bestrode obeyed the spur, when I attempted to force him onward, with a sort of terror, again stood suddenly still for an instant, and then finally advanced in a tremor. It was some time before he fell into his usual pace. Upon my arrival in Louisville I was at once surrounded at the tavern door, and pertinaciously asked if I had noticed anything of the earthquake, and I felt authorized to say that I had. The Ohio had been frozen over for several days, and for more than a week past no boat had descended the stream; hence my boats and my friend Hollander were frozen up on the way between Limestone and Louisville. Three days afterwards, just as we had all sat down to dinner, the whole house was violently shaken; glasses, plates, and bottles jingled, and fell from the board; most of the guests leaped to their feet, exclaiming, "There's the earthquake, by jingo! there is no humbug about it!" as they rushed into the street. But all was still again, and every one gradually returned to his house. Early the next morning I learned that the earthquake had loosened the ice from the Ohio, and had again opened the current of the stream, and that several boats, among others two flats, fastened together, had been carried down over the Falls lying between Louisville and the little town

of Shippingport, situated at the distance of a few miles from the former place. I at once rode over to Shippingport, and there found my boats and my companion in safety. So soon as we had replenished and increased our stock of provisions I returned to my boats, and, having recommenced our journey, we in a few days left the clear transparent waters of the Ohio, and passed by its junction with the mighty Mississippi into the thick and turbid flood of the latter stream. We floated on quietly for several days, arresting our course, as was usual, at night, and securing our boats in any way we could to the river bank. In flat-boat journeys like ours it is a rule never to trust your craft in the night to the force of the current, for the surface of the water is so frequently broken by trees (which have been swept away from the shore, and then become fast imbedded in the bottom of the river, where they remain immovable, and are designated by the name of *planters*, as well as by those which are, likewise, fast imbedded, but have a constant up and down motion, whence they are known by the title of *sawyers*), that it is almost an impossibility to avoid them at night, and, in fact, to do so is difficult in broad daylight. In this way we reached the small town of New Madrid, on the 6th of February. Some twenty boats, which had left Shippingport at the same time with us, kept us company. It was a clear moonlight night: my friend Hollander had retired to rest, and I was sitting, about twelve o'clock, at a little table, sketching a caricature of Madison,\* then President of the United States, and of whom it was said, that he was under petticoat government. Madison had shortly before issued a proclamation, in which he called upon the American people "to put on armor, and assume a warlike attitude." My caricature represented him in a general's uniform, in an attitude as if he were calling out troops; his wife stood beside him, with a military chapeau on her head, a musket on her shoulder, and arrayed in the red breeches which her predecessor Jeffer-

\* I sent this caricature to David Parish, who hung it up for years in his bed-chamber, at Ogdensburgh. From his hands it passed into the possession of Dennis A. Smith, the well known Cashier of the Mechanics' Bank, in Baltimore, and thence, several years later, it came back to me, after that bank broke.



son was known to have brought from France, after the revolutionary period, when he resided at Paris as Ambassador, and was generally asserted to have worn. I had just given the last touches to the somewhat dilapidated red hose, when there came a frightful crash, like a sudden explosion of artillery, and instantly followed by countless flashes of lightning; the Mississippi foamed up like the water in a boiling cauldron, and the stream flowed rushing back, while the forest trees, near which we lay, came cracking and thundering down. This fearful spectacle lasted for several minutes; and the fierce flashes of lightning, the rush of the receding waters, and the crash of the falling trees, seemed as if they would never end. Hollander, starting half-way up from his bed, hurriedly exclaimed, "What is that, Nolte?" What other answer could I give him but that I myself did not know, yet supposed it to be the effect of an earthquake. I clambered up to the roof of our boat. What a spectacle! Our flats were indeed still floating, but far away from the shore where we had moored them at nightfall. The agitated water all around us, full of trees and branches, which the stream, now flowing in its proper current, was rapidly sweeping away, and a light only here and there visible from the town—in short, a real chaos. The feeble crew, which I had brought along with me from Pittsburgh, to man my flat-boats, consisted of three sailors, whom want of employment at the seaports, while the embargo lasted, had driven to that inland city, and a river pilot, acquainted with those streams. They told me that the boats around us had let go the tackle which secured them to the shore, and were now floating down the stream, and asking whether we had not better do the same thing. I at once reflected that if, under the usual circumstances, it was dangerous, and therefore by no means advisable, to trust to the stream in the night, it must now be much more so, when the danger was greatly increased by the trees which the earthquake had loosened and driven away, and that consequently it would be a better plan to remain where we were until daylight had returned, and we could see our way. At sunrise the whole terrible scene was disclosed to our gaze, and the little town of New Madrid, sunken, destroyed, and overflowed to three-fourths of its extent, lay more than five hundred paces

from us, with some of its scattered inhabitants here and there visible among the ruins. Our boats were fixed in the middle of an island formed by fallen trees, and several hours passed before the crew could cut a passage for them, and get them out. At length we were again floating on the stream, and continued our course, by day's journeys, until we arrived, on the thirty-second day after our departure from Pittsburgh, in Natchez, in the State of Mississippi. Here, where we heard all kinds of details concerning the earthquake, as it had been noticed in that place, we remained a week, during which time not a single one of the boats arrived that had surrounded us on the evening of the 6th of February. When we reached New Orleans, we learned that the earthquake had not been any farther perceptible there, than that the chandeliers in the ball-room had all at once been observed to rock from side to side, and that a number of ladies had felt quite ill, while others instantly fainted. This remarkable earthquake, which was so disastrous in its consequences, commenced in the northwestern part of the State of Missouri, shook the whole extent of Louisiana more or less, and stretched throughout the whole region lying around the Gulf of Mexico as far as Caraccas, where it finally raged with terrible fury, almost entirely destroying that town itself, and reducing to poverty, or swallowing up, 40,000 inhabitants there, and in several other places in the neighborhood. Of the boats which surrounded us on the evening of February 6th nothing was ever afterwards heard, and we should probably have shared the same fate, had it not been for the plan we adopted of remaining by the shore.

I have always regarded it as a great gift of heaven, that amid the many serious dangers in which I have been frequently exposed during the course of my life, I was ever able to retain a certain tranquillity, and my entire presence of mind.

## CHAPTER XI.

### NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans—My first arrangements—Congress declares war against England June 18th, 1812—David Parish assumes one of the Government loans on his own responsibility, and thus gives rise to embarrassment in his affairs—The Peace confirmed at Ghent, in December, 1814, happily extricates him—Tropical hurricane at New Orleans, in the fall of 1812—Fracture of my right arm, in the year 1814—Needless suspension of specie payments by the New Orleans banks—Appointed, by the Exchange, a member of the Committee to examine into the condition of things, and report thereupon, as framer of the report—I get into personal difficulty—The origin of my first duel, with an opponent never known to me or seen by me before—A business operation in Pensacola, by way of the two lakes—Borgne and Pontchartrain, adjacent to New Orleans—The fleet of small craft I take across them, laden with cotton—I arrive with them in Mobile bay, there await the result of the first bombardment of the fort, and take advantage of the moment when the English fleet are hauling off, after their repulse, to run into Pensacola during the night—I am saddled with fresh difficulties by the Clique of the Bank Cashier, Saul in New Orleans; for instance, in an affair with the Marine Paymaster, Shields—Interruption of my quarrel, by the arrival of the English fleet in the Gulf of Florida.

NEW ORLEANS, which I had left more than four and a half years previously, had in that time made no inconsiderable progress—there had been a great deal of new building, and it was much improved. The character of its population, however, had gained nothing. Its old original inhabitants, of French and Spanish origin, had always shown a certain openness, good faith and sincerity, in their mercantile intercourse; but the lawyers who came thither from the northern states, and whose interest it was to stir up litigation to keep themselves from starving, had, by a certain acquaintance with the technicalities of American jurisprudence, and by a spirit of low cunning and adroitness which they introduced,



and even managed to communicate to some of the old inhabitants, been the real cause of this moral retrogression. Governor Claiborne it was who brought election intrigue into fashion, and thereby succeeded in undermining the honorable and amiable character of the original Creoles. Social life had rather been impaired than improved in its relations.

I had just procured a dwelling-house, and furnished it, when the news reached us, from Washington, that war had been declared against England on the 18th of June. This brought all the projects which I had been erecting upon my business relations with Europe to the ground, and all the advantages I was entitled to expect from them vanished out of my hands. Let any one, who can, form an idea of the situation in which I suddenly found myself placed.

David Parish, as I have already stated, had returned from Europe, during the fall of 1811, with great schemes in his head. It had been his intention to withdraw altogether from European business, and to give up his interest in the Antwerp house. But his partner, Mr. G. Agié, one of the most upright and shrewd merchants I ever knew, would not spare his name from the firm, and the latter accordingly remained *David Parish, Agié & Co.* However, Parish had left no money in the concern. The heavy consignments it had received, by means of the advances made by him with the capital gathered from Mexico, and which it still continued to receive, were, as a matter of course, favorable likewise to Agié, and had indeed helped him to acquire a much larger fortune than he had ever expected to make. Upon his return to the United States, Parish had brought along with him the French architect Ramée, who was the builder of the first *Börsenhalle* or Bourse of Hamburgh, which he put up for Mr. Von Hostrup: in addition to this individual he also brought, either through charity or as a companion, a French painter of miniatures, a man already far advanced in years—a *bon enfant, bon mangeur, bon faiseur, de calembourgs*—in short, a *farceur*, who, like Shakespeare's Falstaff, was not only witty himself, but furnished ample material for the wit of others: this party of useful people in a household was completed by an excellent French cook. Ramée was to put up for

him, at Ogdensburgh, a suitable residence, a church, and other buildings, and to carry out several more or less considerable structures in a smaller place, to which Parish had already given the name of Parishville. Ouvrard mentions the origin of this still embryo town in his memoirs, as follows: "I had seen Mr. David Parish at Antwerp, whither he had just established a house, which was then of too little importance to let slip the opportunity of forming some connexion with my business. Summoned for the purpose by the Messrs. Hope, he consented to take up his abode in the United States, where, although but the simple agent of an operation scarcely yet alive, his own fortune soon ascended to the level of the first houses existing, and even permitted him to give his name to a town in America."

The war with England necessarily involved an immense outlay of funds, and gave rise to great financial embarrassment on the part of the United States government, which kept offering loans at constantly increasing rates of interest, but found few who were willing to lend the money. Parish, without any preliminary consultation with the European capitalists, least of all with the Barings, as will presently be seen, and without any particular understanding with the capitalists of the United States with whom he had formed connexions, or the banks, assumed one of these loans at high rates of interest, purchasing on a low quotation in the money market; but he soon found that he was out of his calculation, as the loan found few takers, and they only for small sums; it consequently fell below the stipulated rate of exchange, and left most of the obligations incurred resting upon his shoulders. His own active capital was speedily absorbed, and Parish thought there could be no easier way of extricating himself from this embarrassment, than to send the greater portion of the stock certificates to the Messrs. Barings in London, and in return place large sums to his own account. The result of this bold measure is easily foreseen. The London house sent back his certificates, and refused his drafts—England was at open war with the United States! Parish seemed to have forgotten, that at a lord mayor's dinner, given in London, in 1808, the old Sir Francis Baring had, amid the frowns of the company, to defend himself from the re-

proach that his house, by the use of its capital and the sale of American state paper, was furthering the views of the hostile American government.

In New Orleans I was too remote from the scene of these difficulties, in which Parish had become involved, to have a fair and thorough knowledge of them ; but the simple fact that he attempted to have his paper discounted in all the banks, with unimportant names for indorsers, was enough to show that he no longer retained that elevated place he had asserted in the American money market only two years before ; and his friends, with deep regret, saw financial difficulty surrounding the man who had so long been accustomed to relieving others from it. Parish was naturally good-hearted, and it had become a proverb that he could not say nay to any applicant. Let the reader now imagine this man, who had never made others feel unpleasantly the importance and weight of his position, placed in such a situation as compelled him to depend upon the good will of those around him. The Olivers', Craig, and others, who had to thank him for the origin of their wealth, did not feel inclined to risk, once more, the money they had accumulated ; and the shyness with which they met his combinations at this time may be conceived. Parish's position had become extremely critical, when the peace, concluded at Ghent, on December 24th, 1814, between the United States and Great Britain, at once restored American paper to its full value, and raised it to quotations in the market which were profitable instead of disastrous. Parish was saved.

Now, to return to my own situation when, within a few months after the foundation of my establishment, I was suddenly cut off from all resources. The absence of business thence resulting, the difficulty bordering almost upon impossibility, of tracing out under these circumstances, any business combinations at all corresponding to the enterprising mercantile spirit, and yet not calculated to place one's reputation for commercial foresight in jeopardy, made life wearisome among a population such as New Orleans at that time contained. It could, indeed, be borne, but it made the joyless void of existence, when the object of that existence has departed, most keenly felt. It was like a dead calm



to the mariner, but with this difference, that the latter continues only for days or weeks, while the termination of my stagnant inactivity could not be calculated, but might extend for years.

The Mississippi was blockaded and narrowly watched by two English vessels of war. After this sad beginning of the war, the whole city and district of country was so additionally unfortunate as to be devastated by a hurricane of the kind which so frequently occurs in tropical climates, at the time of the solstice. Eighteen of the vessels lying in the harbor were thrown on the left bank of the Mississippi, where they remained completely wrecked; many houses, and half-finished buildings were blown down, and most of the roofs in the city were torn away to the last shingle. Such were the reminiscences of the first year of the war!

Its second year, 1813, brought me fresh proofs of the frail tenure by which human life and comfort are held. In the month of May, as I was taking a pleasure ride on horseback, with a friend, he remarked that some one had told him what a fine racer my horse was, and that he would like to see him running. I assented to the proposed test, adding that he would have to rein up his horse, since so long as mine could hear another galloping close by him, it was impossible to hold him back. This he agreed to do, but did not keep his word, for the moment I had put spurs to my animal, he whipped his horse into full speed, and shouted after me:—"Hallo! I think I can beat you!" The affair turned out just as I had told him; I could no longer check my horse, and away he went like the wind, until a sudden stumble precipitated him to the ground, and I was thrown on my side on the highway, where I lay for some time quite lifeless, at the distance of two miles from the city. My head was severely wounded, and my arm was broken at the elbow, in such a way that it has remained crooked and bent ever since, so that I cannot extend it to its full length.

Party spirit was embittered by the languishing state of things in the city, and day by day increased to such an extent as to cause the greatest division and irreconcilable enmities where social intercourse had just begun. People would gather at the

corners of the streets, to hear or circulate all sorts of private scandal. Ready money became scarce. The whole adjacent coast was disquieted and kept in terror by pirates; among the latter, the most conspicuous were the brothers Laffitte, from Bayonne, Sauvelet, Beluche, Dominique, Gamba and others, who were time and again, seen walking about, publicly, in the streets of New Orleans. They had their friends and acquaintances, their depôts of goods, &c., in the city, and sold, almost openly, the wares they had obtained by piracy, particularly English manufactured goods. The slave trade, too, was especially flourishing under their auspices. These pirates captured Spanish and other slave ships on the high seas, and established their main depôt and rendezvous on the little island of Barataria, lying near the coast adjacent to New Orleans. This place was visited by the sugar planters, chiefly of French origin, who bought up the stolen slaves at from 150 to 200 dollars per head, when they could not have procured as good stock in the city for less than 600 or 700 dollars. These were then conveyed to the different plantations, through the innumerable creeks called *bayous*, that communicate by manifold little branches, with each other. This clandestine traffic was one of the causes to which the scarcity of ready money was to be attributed. The planters, instead of taking bank notes with them, invariably provided themselves with coin to pay for their purchases. This money, however, did not leave the country, but was hoarded away in the private coffers of those who performed the part of secret agents for the pirates, and was thus withdrawn from general circulation. The French and Catalonian population of the city had never been able to persuade themselves that bank-notes are just as good as cash in representing value when based upon the security of a well-managed banking capital, and just when the prejudice against them was passing away, the jealous manœuvring of two cashiers, one *T. L. Harman*, in the Planter's Bank, the other *Joseph Saul*, in the Bank of Orleans, both Englishmen by birth, again revived it. The latter cashier aimed at destroying the credit of the Planter's Bank, and attracting its customers to his own, as they were mostly planters who allowed their deposits to lie longer than the merchants were accustomed to do. The

cashier, who could wind the whole Board of Directors belonging to the Bank, around his little finger, had contracted its discounting operations, and thus brought about a much smaller issue of paper than the Planter's Bank had made; he then, carefully, collected the notes of the rival bank as they were coming in, and after getting unfavorable reports into circulation concerning the Planter's Bank, he suddenly presented the accumulated mass of notes, requiring payment of the same in silver, on a day when he knew that his neighbor's supply of that metal was very much reduced. The amount demanded by the notes went far beyond the quantity of silver in the possession of the Planter's Bank; and the clerk of the Bank of Orleans who presented them, instantly returned with word that they would have further consultation on the subject. This was enough. The whole population was thrown into excitement; there was an immediate run upon the Planter's Bank; but there was no distinction drawn by the excited public, between it and the Bank of Orleans, which like its rival and anticipated victim, was likewise brought to a stand still, in the payment of its notes. The inhabitants hurried to the exchange, and named a committee of five members, viz: Messrs. Nott, H. Landreaux, and P. F. Dubourg, merchants, Mr. Mazureau a lawyer, and myself, for the purpose of examining into the actual condition of the banks, and reporting thereupon. My colleague, Nott, was the only one of these who possessed any insight into the matter, while the other two merchants had but little knowledge of the subject, and the lawyer, Mazureau, was totally destitute of an idea respecting the system of money-circulation, yet *ipso motu*, held himself solely authorized to draw up the report which had been intrusted to Mr. Nott and myself, as well as to him. The very first charge of Mr. Mazureau, full of hollow words and declamation, at once convinced me that he had formed no correct conception of the real state of things; and therefore, did not know what he was talking about. I asked leave to present another statement; and when I had communicated it to the other members, when the latter came to decide between mine and the one handed in by the attorney, they accepted mine with four votes, while Mr. Mazureau's had only his own voice in its



favor. The report drawn up by me, after setting forth the actual position of the Banks, as we found them, and expressing assurances in relation to their solvency, that were calculated to quiet all apprehension in every quarter, went on to regret that such an unnecessary excitement should have been produced by the petty jealousies of two cashiers, whose manœuvres had created a general business distrust, which should not, and could not have arisen had they really taken the interests of the city to heart. The cashier of the Planter's Bank, who was my personal friend, viewed this in the proper light; but the cashier of the Orleans Bank, a very irritable and petulant man, was thrown into a perfect fury, and vented his rage, at every public resort, in the most contemptuous and injurious language. He soon learned from our colleague Mazureau, that I had penned the obnoxious document, with the addition, however, that it was an affair arranged between Mr. Nott and Mr. Nolte; and that the other two members of the committee had merely surrendered their judgment, at discretion.

It was now reported, throughout the city, that Mr. Saul had threatened to punish us both, and not to rest until he had taken ample satisfaction out of us. His first attack was directed against my friend Mr. Nott, who happened to be one of the directors of the Bank of Orleans, of which Saul was the cashier. He managed at once, but very quietly, to collect the Bank powers-of-attorney of most of the stockholders, so as to be enabled to cast votes in their name, at the approaching yearly election of new bank directors; he then had several shares bought up by his creatures, and in this way managed to get the majority of votes into his hands, determined to use them for the purpose of defeating the re-election of the directors who were disagreeable to him: these were six in number, with Nott at their head. Young and inexperienced merchants of no weight or importance were elected in their stead. Inflated by this success, he daily went about boasting, on both Bourses—there were then two in New Orleans, the American and French—and threatening that, sooner or later, he would richly chastise us both, for what we had done. I was unwilling to take any notice of this contemptible proceeding, but Nott desired to put Saul's courage to the test, and requested me to hand that per-

son a note, in his name, requesting him either to declare the story respecting the threatened chastisement untrue, or to hold himself in readiness to give him personal satisfaction. We both looked upon this as offering him a chance of withdrawing from his boasts, by a couple of friendly words addressed to me. So I took Nott's letter to the dwelling of Mr. Saul, but not finding him at home, looked for him in the street, and met him coming back from the cricket ground. I proceeded to hand him the little note with all due politeness. He read it through apparently without any agitation, and replied in a defiant, arrogant tone that he would send a reply. "Through whom, Mr. Saul? I ask, in order that I may have an interview with your friend." "That is none of your business!" he answered with persistent insolence. "Well, then," I rejoined, "give me a line to show that my friend's letter has reached your hands, and my mission is then completed!" Saul's response to this demand was a furious blow of his fist in my right eye—he had always boasted of his skill and practice as a boxer—and I, whom the fracture of my arm, a couple of months before, had rendered utterly unable to make any resistance, broke away from him and hurried across the street; however, he followed me, and seizing me by the collar, jerked me backwards to the ground. While I was in this position he beat my head against the edge of the curb-stone with such violence that I lay there senseless and bleeding. A couple of acquaintances, who found me in this condition, brought me, not without some trouble, to my home, and I was there confined to bed by my wounds and bruises during a whole fortnight.

Nott called to see me at once, and remarked that he knew what was reserved for him to do, and that he hoped, in the course of the next morning, to bring me some gratifying news of my *assassin*, as he called him. About 10 o'clock on the ensuing day he came into my room, with the words: "Your assassin, Mr. Nolte, is weltering in his blood!" "What!" I exclaimed, "dead?" "No!" he answered, "not dead, but shot through the body!" And here he went on to tell me, that the moment he heard of the treatment I had received, he sent Saul a challenge to meet him the next morning, with pistols, and at the same time declaring

that the whole business must be done within twelve hours. Saul had agreed to meet him at 8 o'clock, and I now knew the result. It appeared, upon examination, that Saul's wound would have been mortal had he not, contrary to all the rules of the *duello*, wrapped a silk bandage around his body; Nott's bullet had struck him, but its force was broken by the band of silk, which was ten yards in length, and wrapped several times about Saul's person, and glanced aside, lodging beneath one of his right ribs. A fortnight afterwards I was well, and did not delay 24 hours in demanding personal satisfaction from Mr. Saul, for the mal-treatment he had inflicted on me. His reply was that "he had already given Mr. Nott personal satisfaction for what had occurred between him and me, and that he was not bound to render account to any one else." The reader will at once perceive that this was a reply not calculated to meet my wishes. I again wrote to Saul, that I would not accept such a reply; that Mr. Nott had looked upon the treatment I had received as a personal insult to himself, but that I was not accustomed to settle my accounts at the cost of other people, and that what I expected from him was instant satisfaction. I waited three days for a reply, but in vain. I then resolved to have my two letters and his reply printed, with the words beneath them: "I do, therefore, hereby declare JOSEPH SAUL to be A WORTHLESS RASCAL and A COWARD!" This card, signed by me, was then posted on all the public places and street corners, and by seven o'clock the following morning they were everywhere visible. The excitement in the city was very great; public opinion—that is to say, all those who were not afraid of having the discounting of their notes refused, for it was generally believed that their acceptance or rejection depended upon the disposition of the cashier—spoke loudly in my favor. I, however, felt unhappy to the last degree, so long as I had not got satisfaction from the aggressor, and for some time knew scarcely what to do, as my crippled arm deprived me of the possibility of encountering him in any other way than with the pistol; and, consequently, I could not venture to lay the cowhide over his shoulders. At length I bethought me of a plan which I considered infallible, for the attainment of my object. It was as follows:—



Among the generals on the American side who had been sent to the Canadian frontiers, not merely for the purpose of defending them, but also to carry on offensive operations against the English army then extended along the lines, was one named William Hull, who, upon the first approach of the English corps, although it was inferior to his own, retreated, and at last surrendered, without striking a blow. He was soon afterwards exchanged, and immediately upon his return brought before a court-martial, which sentenced him to be degraded from the service, and, by public proclamation, declared him to be a *poltroon* and *coward*. I had a letter published in the "*Ami des Lois*," purporting to be from the condemned general to one of his friends in New Orleans, in which he bitterly complained of his hard lot, but more particularly of the wretched position in which he was placed by his sentence; since, from the moment when he was proclaimed a coward, no one would have anything to do with him, much less extend a hand to grasp his. He could, therefore, continued the letter, no longer remain in Boston, and was longing to find some other place where people did not think so much of such affairs; and, if it were true, as he had learned, that Joseph Saul, cashier of the Orleans Bank, was about to resign his place and retire, he would be glad to fill the vacancy, as he had been told that, in spite of the disgraceful reputation of being a cowardly knave, a man could carry on business with the greatest boldness; and that there were even some folks there who, on discounting day, would hold out a friendly hand; and that, as he was not a whit better or worse than this Saul, he deserved to be placed upon as good a level. In common with every honorable man in New Orleans, I had a right to expect that this letter, the authorship of which the newspaper editor was empowered to reveal, would bring the individual on whom it bore into the field, but I counted without my host.

Mr. Saul, and the clique that counselled him did not look upon matters in that light. They were, indeed, anxious to wipe out the dishonor put upon him, but without danger to him, and at all events, not at their own expense. They imagined that I would not be so rash as to fight, notwithstanding my crippled arm, and that it was only necessary to provide some vent for my ill

humor. So they hit upon the plan of hunting up some one whom they could, without great difficulty, persuade to send me a challenge, not for any reasonable cause, so that I, as they presumed would happen, should decline it, and yield them all the pleasure of posting me at the corners of the streets, as I had done to their friend Saul. With this intention, they looked about them for some time without success; but after the lapse of a fortnight, chance favored their sinister project. A nephew of General Hull, named Allen, who was then at Mobile, in the capacity of under Paymaster to a regiment of United States troops, quartered there, came on to New Orleans to attend to some regimental business. They found him out, and the endeavor to work up sufficiently, terminated as they wished. At the same time I received warning that family friends of General Hull were preparing to wreak vengeance on me. The editor of the "Ami des Lois," let me know that there had been some one inquiring of him who it was that had written the offensive letter, and that the person wishing to know was called Allen. On the next day, while at table, I received a visit from Captain Perry, who handed me an open letter, signed by Mr. Allen; and informed me that the latter on his own behalf, and in the name of his family, demanded personal satisfaction of me for having disrespectfully used the name of their unfortunate relative, General Hull. I replied, that I was ready to grant it, and that if he would be at the French Exchange by 8 o'clock, I would send him my friend Nott, to make the necessary preparations for the meeting. Nott at once expressed his willingness to act as my second in the affair, and met Captain Perry that evening at the Exchange. They arranged that the duel should take place at 7 o'clock the next morning, on the road to the Bayou\* St. John; that pistols should be the weapons used, the distance ten paces, and that we should both fire at the same moment, upon the given word. Nott returned to the Exchange while I remained at home to write some letters, and make some needful preparations. An hour later, Nott came back to me and said:—"They appear to rue the step they have

\* Bayou is the local name for a small river or creek.

taken." "How is that?" I asked. "Well," replied Nott, "I have just met Captain Perry, at the Exchange, and he came right up to me, with a very friendly air, expressing his regret that things had gone so far. He confessed that he had been led into error by people representing that you were an insolent European, who imagined that he could say or do anything to Americans; he then went on to say that the only thing required was a slight correction of language, rather than anything serious, and that you would assuredly decline the challenge." (I should then have had the pleasure of beholding my name figuring on all the street corners!) "Instead of finding a disagreeable person, he continued, he was received by you in the politest manner possible; and, after promptly accepting the challenge, you had offered a glass of d—d good Madeira; it would be a pity to see two clever men, who had no real cause of animosity against each other, fighting for a mere piece of sport, which had been misunderstood! Is there no way, he said, in conclusion, of settling the matter peaceably? I replied," continued Nott, "that I could see no possibility of such an arrangement, now that the challenge had been sent in and accepted. He then rejoined, that if the challenge were returned with a simple declaration that there had been no intention of offending the Hull family, he would take it upon himself to have the thing set right. And now, it depends upon you; will you return the challenge?"

"Not at all," I answered, adding that I would have accepted this offer without hesitation, if they had acted in some other fashion; but that now, since the challenge had been given and taken up, no retraction was to be thought of; I, at the same time, remarked to Nott, that I had already perceived how it was in New Orleans, where so many adventurers and worthless men from distant regions, flocked in, and endeavored, although rogues, to pass for honest men; no other way was open for them than to attack the personal courage of a man, so that because they were always ready to fight, they might put forward higher claims to consideration than the good and prudent citizen who was unwilling to jeopard his life, and the fortunes of his family at any and every moment for nothing. For that reason, said I to Nott,



I have resolved to let slip no opportunity of making such a sacrifice, in duty to myself and my own peace of mind,—the first course I had taken was the best, and I would not recede from it.” Nott admitted that I was perfectly right; he confessed that in view of the usages and customs prevailing where a man is living, no other means of securing his tranquillity is open to him than to bow sometimes before necessity, even should he do it, with a protest in his heart, and without respect for the system he was thus compelled to obey.

The next morning, I met my antagonist, whom I had never before seen, at the appointed rendezvous. He was accompanied by Captain Perry and Dr. Hermann, a German, employed as a surgeon in the American army. My medical attendant was a Frenchman named Gros, now a resident at Tarbes, among the Pyrenees. At the first fire, the barrel of my adversary’s pistol was struck by my ball, and fell broken to the ground. Before the second, I was asked by Captain Perry if I had anything to say: I, of course, replied in the negative, adding that I should remain in my present attitude until parties declared themselves satisfied. The bullets crossed without effect. At the third fire, when my ball grazed my adversary’s right shoulder, and glanced past the back of his skull, he exclaimed:—“By God! that seems enough!” Our seconds then had a brief consultation together, and at length announced to me that Mr. Allen would approach me unarmed, and with outstretched hand, and that if I would then step forward to meet him in the same way, and declare that in the letter I had got the *Ami des Lois* to publish, I had not meant to insult the family of General Hull, the affair would be at an end. I consented to this, and the next day my disclaimer to this effect, appeared in the *Ami des Lois* with the addition, that the real object of that letter had been no other than to lash Mr. Joseph Saul with the scourge of ridicule, for his pitiful cowardice.

About three days after the duel, I met Mr. Allen. He approached me, with tears in his eyes, and taking my hand in a friendly way, confessed that he had acted in a hostile spirit towards me, but that he had been set on to do it, and become the blind instrument of persons whose secret purpose he had not at

first divined. I begged him to tell me the names of these honorable people, and learned just as I had all along taken for granted, that they were no other than Mr. Saul, and his clique.

I have narrated the story of these personal difficulties, which can have no very great interest for my readers, with a certain degree of minuteness, so as to present a fair view of the social condition of things in New Orleans, at that period. It was not only a nest of pirates, but a place of resort for every description of schemers and scamps, against whom nearly every other community was closed. Nott, an American by birth, who had lived for some time in France, and could boast a degree of culture, and I, held ourselves aloof as much as possible from such a population, and visited only some of the older and most respectable families, never going near any of the drinking establishments, gambling saloons, &c., &c. For this very reason, we were hated and persecuted by the mass of the population, and looked upon with suspicion. "Inimical to the best interests of the country," was the usual phrase applied to us, although the existence of such an idea long remained unknown to us.

Just about this time there was a rumor afloat of a large expedition fitting out, in England, against the southern coasts of the United States, especially the seaboard of Louisiana. A freebooter gang, under an English major named Nicholas, had placed itself in communication with the pirates of Barataria, and English cruisers were from time to time seen in the Gulf of Mexico, and off the mouths of the Mississippi. Navigation on the two lakes, Borgne and Pontchartrain, back of New Orleans, had never been disturbed, and to the entrance of Mobile Bay or Mobile Point, as it is called, to the harbor of Pensacola, which remained opened to the English and their flag, was about six hours sail. At Pensacola, Louisiana cotton could not be procured by the English for less than from 22 to 24 cents per pound, while in New Orleans it cost only half that rate. Intercourse was then carried on between the country bordering the lakes, and even between New Orleans and Pensacola, by means of small craft, counting from ten to fifteen tons, which conveyed flour, wine, spirituous liquors, etc., etc., to and from. The whole flotilla amounted to about

twenty-five sail. One morning I chartered the larger of these, loaded them with cotton, to the extent of about 250 bales in all, and dispatched them to Mobile Bay, there to await my arrival. A day or two afterwards I reached the place, in a small empty schooner, and lay close to Fort Mobile, before which a small English squadron was cruising, and at length began to make preparations for bombarding the fort. The attack came at last, and continued, right before my eyes, from one o'clock in the afternoon until seven in the evening. The little fort withstood the cannonade of five war vessels most bravely, and responded to it with such effect as evidently to occasion them very great damage. I now brought the whole of my little flotilla from the middle of the bay close to the fort, and waited in my little clipper for the retreat of the British squadron. When this occurred, at sundown, I sailed along close at its heels, yet at a certain distance, and saw that it bore direct for Pensacola, where, thought I, they would be more likely to occupy themselves with repairing their damage than in capturing small craft like mine. So I returned to the bay, hauled out my flotilla, and, favored during the night by a cloudless moon and fair wind, brought it by sunrise safe into the harbor of Pensacola. Here I sold my cotton, on the spot, at twenty-two cents per pound, and in return purchased three packs woollen blankets at five and a half to six dollars. With these I went through Mobile Bay and the small lakes back to New Orleans, where the blankets were worth from ten to eleven dollars. The proper period for the sale of that article is in December, at the beginning of the sugar crop. Everybody thought this little venture of mine a pretty thing, and greeted me on 'Change with, "Ah, you have been to visit your friends the English?"

Saul and his set, who never rested in their hostility to me, had fished up another dupe, in the person of a certain purser Shields, of the navy, whose head they had filled with stories of the intrigues and treasonable plots, in which they represented Nott and myself to be engaged. This half-crazy fellow had repeatedly gone so far, in conversation with Dr. Morris—a surgeon in the navy, who frequently visited us—as to say that he had testimony in his possession which would convince him (Dr. Morris) that we were



regular traitors, hostilely disposed towards the American government, and *unfair* in our dealings. Peremptorily called upon to come forward with this testimony, he retracted, so far as Nott was concerned; "Since," said he, "Nott was a *native*, and not, like me, an *adopted* American, and consequently must love his own country more than any other; but what he had asserted respecting me he would maintain. The real motive that impelled him to draw this distinction between Nott and myself lay in the fact that Nott was one of the best marksmen in the city, while, in my case, owing to my crippled arm, there was not so much risk to be incurred. A polite letter which I wrote to him, requesting him to name a place and hour, where he would unfold to a friend, whom I would dispatch to him for that purpose, the proofs of my "hostile intentions" and my "unfairness," remained during several days unanswered—he was compelled to visit Mobile on business, and would have to postpone the desired information until his return. Having, at length, got back from Mobile, a fortnight elapsed before he took any step, and he then employed the pen of an attorney to write me a letter, full of the most pitiful subterfuge, and declaring that he had not made himself responsible for the production of those proofs before any one but Dr. Morris. A second letter from me, of a less mild but rather very positive character, also remained for some time unanswered. At this moment our civil and military authorities received information, from the government at Washington, that an English fleet, with a considerable body of troops on board, and bound for Louisiana, had not only sailed from England, but had even left Jamaica, and that we had to expect its speedy appearance in our waters, and must be prepared for it. Now came some lines from Mr. Shields, informing me that at this conjuncture he must devote all his attention to the country's service, and therefore let our differences rest until the critical moment had passed. The whole affair was, in itself, of so contemptible a description, the individual with whom I had to deal such a silly jackanapes, and my disgust for the business so profound, that I determined to throw no difficulty in the way of his doing what he mentioned in his letter, but to wait with a hope that he would, in the meanwhile, come to the use of his

senses, and make some reparation. The presence of any narrative touching this contemptible affair, in the place where the reader finds it, is due to nothing but the influence it exercised upon my second duel. Moreover, it completes the picture of the then existing social relations at New Orleans—a state of things which seems scarcely credible at the present day.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### JACKSON'S DEFENCE OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS.

His arrival there on the 1st of December, 1814—Simultaneous arrival of the English fleet in the waters of Florida—Capture of our gunboats by the English, on the 14th of December—March of our militia battalions to the Bayou St. John, on Lac Borgne—On the 23d of December, the first intelligence is received that the British had landed on the plantation of General Villeré—We are ordered to the spot with all the troops under Jackson's command—The night engagement of December 23d—The burning of our cutter, the *Carolina*, by an English battery, on Christmas day—The heavy cannonade on New-Year's day, 1815—The complete discomfiture of the British force, under General Pakenham, on the occasion of its attack on our first line, January 8th, 1815—Immensely disproportionate loss of the English—Completion of the British retreat, on January 16th.

THE crisis was indeed a serious one. The President of the United States had commissioned General Jackson, who commanded the militia of the State of Tennessee, to defend the southern coasts against the anticipated invasion of the British. This personage had never enjoyed the least opportunity of obtaining any regular military instruction. He had passed a great portion of his earlier years in the political contests and broils of the regions in which he lived ; and had even been accustomed to carry and use his pistols in the very courts where he had sat as judge ; while of the art of war he knew nothing but its fortitude and perseverance, although well acquainted with the barbarity of combats with the Indian tribes, and the cold-blooded massacre and extirpation meted out to the savage race.

It was on the 1st of December, 1814, that Jackson made his appearance in the neighborhood of New Orleans with somewhat less than 1500 men. This feeble force embarked on flats and



keel-boats at Nashville, in the State of Tennessee, had floated out of the Cumberland river, and thence descended the Mississippi to its destination. It was made up partly of volunteers and partly of drafted militia, drawn by lot from among the male inhabitants of Tennessee and Kentucky. Among the volunteers was a body of about five hundred men, who had taken part with Jackson in the Indian wars. They were commanded by General Coffee, and formed what was called *Coffee's Brigade*. They were the best and most practised men of the 1500, and were subdivided into companies of riflemen, which were under the command of captains, lieutenants, and sergeants, elected by themselves; a system that applied to the whole mass. These men carried nothing but their pieces, their cartouch-boxes and powder-horns—their bullets were usually in their pantaloons pockets—they had no idea whatever of military organization and discipline: they paid attention only to the more important part of their calling, which, according to their notions, was quietly to pick out their man, fix him in their aim, and “bring him down.”

General Jackson had a Captain Haines and a Major Reed, of the militia, for military adjutants, and a Colonel Butler, of an American regiment of the line for quarter-master. Not one of these gentlemen, Jackson himself included, understood one word of French, which was the language then generally spoken in Louisiana, much less were they in the slightest degree acquainted with the way of thinking, ideas, manners, and customs of the population, which was chiefly of French origin. Upon this occasion, the lawyer, Edward Livingston, whom I have already mentioned, and who was then residing at New Orleans, renewed his acquaintanceship with Jackson; who at once saw of what invaluable service this skilful and experienced man, who had for more than ten years lived in close contact with the mixed population of Louisiana, might then be, and afterwards become, to him. Again, the General knew much better how to handle the sword than the pen, and although he had been both a lawyer and a judge, wrote his native tongue in a very imperfect and unorthographic style: how, then, could he have hit upon a better hand to prepare his dispatches for the government, than the author of the Criminal Code in Lou-

isiana, his friend, the renowned writer and orator, Edward Livingston? This was sufficient reason for a joyful acceptance of his offer to act as Jackson's volunteer aid and private secretary! Livingston had himself dubbed colonel, and, in addition to his services, those of his brother-in-law Davezac, elsewhere mentioned, and of two other lawyers, A. L. Duncan and John R. Grymes, by name, along with Duplessis, the district marshal, or five persons in all, were accepted in the capacity of volunteer adjutants; the two lawyers, with the title of colonel, and the district marshal and Livingston's brother-in-law, as majors. Among this quintuple staff of adjutants, Livingston himself was the most distinguished and really useful man, while Grymes was the intrepid one of their number; the other three were of very little, if any service, as the sequel will show, and were entirely out of their element, when it came to confronting the hostile fire. Livingston had until then lain under the suspicion of poltroonery, and if the celebrated French academician and historian Mignet, speaks, in his obituary of Edward Livingston, published in the *Journal des Debats*, of the daring courage which distinguished that gentleman amid the perils of battle, he had no other authority for the narrative than Livingston himself. As Jackson once said, "Fighting, not writing, is my business!" Livingston might have exclaimed in the inverse sense, "Writing, not fighting, is my business!" Again, as to this matter, the reader will learn, in the course of the present history, with what zeal the volunteer adjutants, of whom only one showed any real bravery, applied themselves to the work of informing their contemporaries and posterity after them of their personal prowess. The excellent proclamations addressed by Jackson to the country, to the inhabitants of the city, and to the citizen militia; all the dispatches sent to the President, at Washington, in relation to the events and operations transpiring until the invading British force had withdrawn, were from Livingston's pen. The dispatch at the close of the brief campaign is from the hand of Mr. Grymes.

On December 14th, 1814, intelligence was received at New Orleans that the English squadron, under the command of Cochrane and Malcolm, with a considerable body of troops on

board, had appeared in the waters of the Florida Gulf. At once all was bustle at New Orleans—Jackson was untiringly active. A mile and a half in the rear of the city flows the Bayou St. John into the small Lac Borgne, of which I have already spoken. From this lake the Gulf of Florida is reached by a narrow pass, called "*Les rigolets*." At the mouth of this bayou stands a small fort, and another is placed half way up the pass, but both together do not count more than ten cannon. The entrance to this pass was guarded by five small gunboats, of which each one carried a 24 pounder and two small carronades, and was commanded by officers of the United States navy.

On the 14th of December these gunboats were attacked by the English, in boats filled with seamen and marines, and after a brief struggle overpowered. The English had not one single piece of cannon in their small craft, but sustained the fire of the gunboats with great coolness as they approached, and took them by boarding. It was on the morning of the 16th, or two days after this occurred, that Jackson learned the capture of his flotilla.

The only perfectly armed, well equipped, and really disciplined corps of the citizen militia under the general's command, was the little first battalion of the first regiment, consisting of about 550 men, and counting, among its officers some who had fought beneath the eye of Napoleon in Egypt; as, for example, Mr. P. Roche, at that time a French bookseller at New Orleans. My situation had become a critical one. I was entitled to complete exemption from military duty, owing to the fact of having been disabled by my fall of the preceding year. I could have folded my arms with a good conscience; and, not as many of the young inhabitants of New Orleans would have liked to do with flimsy pretexts, have remained inside of the city: but, as the suspicion of entertaining a secret preference for the English and English interests rested on me, I could not have done so without incurring malicious remarks, and, very probably, persecution. Apart from this inferior motive for action, I could not coolly have listened to the near roll of musketry and the thunder of cannon without excitement. For this reason, then, I determined to join the small corps referred to, as a member of the so-called Carabineer company.



The little battalion was sent, on that very same day (December 16th) by Jackson, to Bayou St. John, and placed under the command of Major J. B. Planché, a native of Louisiana, who had hitherto commanded the Carabineers. A second company, the Chasseurs, was put under the order of St. Romes, an emigrant from St. Domingo, and at that time one of the editors of the *Courrier de la Louisiane*, instead of their captain, *Daquin*, who had commanded them up to that moment; a third was intrusted to St. Gême, another French emigrant, who had been for some time in the English service at Jamaica; a fourth, consisting entirely of Irishmen, had one of their countrymen, called Maunsel White, at their head; and the remainder of the battalion, was composed of volunteer mulattoes and negroes, who had selected *Daquin*, formerly a baker at St. Domingo, for their commander. Jackson's whole force consisted of these two half battalions, a brace of companies belonging to the second regiment of United States regulars, one company of artillerists, also from the regular army, and under the command of Captain Humphries, a company of marines led by Major Carmick, and the 1,500 riflemen from Tennessee and Kentucky, who were stationed above the city. At that moment, too, there was formed a company of volunteer riflemen, under the command of a Mr. Beale, a man of advanced years, a native of Virginia, and then residing in New Orleans, where he had some reputation as a fine marksman. This company was principally made up of Americans from the northern states, and people of some instruction: it numbered among its ranks Mr. B. Lewis, Judge of the first District Court in Louisiana, B. Chew, Director of the Custom House, Messrs. Montgomery & Touro, still living, and known as wealthy and respectable merchants, the deceased merchants, Story, Kenner, and Henderson, the lawyer Pouter de Peystee, and many others. The carabineers, under the orders of Roche, also contained many of the élite of the population, among them Messrs. Millaudon, Musson, McCall and Shepherd, the former three still living. Jackson's perseverance and energy, in availing himself of every resource at his command, were indefatigable; and all the more necessary too, that the government, owing to the lack of pecuniary resources, had left Louisiana almost unprovi

ded; but again, more especially, in its arrangements, for the land troops and marines had displayed a most astonishing ignorance and carelessness. Thus, they had sent *molasses* from *Boston* by land and down the western rivers to New Orleans, apparently entirely forgetting that Boston and the northeastern States procured that very article by sea from New Orleans! What I am about to relate in the next paragraph will convey an idea of the use Jackson managed to make of his scattered and merely adventitious resources, as well as the skill Livingston displayed in turning them to account.

I have already referred to the colony of pirates, which infested the little islands that are dotted along the southern shores of Louisiana, and had their main resort at Barataria during the earlier years of the American occupancy of that province. At the head of these marauding bands were the two brothers Lafitte, from Bayonne, the elder of whom called himself the emperor of Barataria, and often published parodies of the Napoleonic proclamations in the paper of his friend Leclerc. I have also intimated that Lafitte, his brother Beluche, and others, celebrated pirates, frequently showed themselves in the streets of New Orleans, which they usually paraded arm in arm with Livingston's brother-in-law, Davezac, and with Leclerc, both of whom they regarded as bosom-friends. Several times caught, as they were, Livingston and his brother-in-law always managed to get them released. The native-born citizens of French origin, or Creoles, as they are called, and the French and Spaniards who had settled there, could not appreciate the superiority of a jury, but found it a rather burdensome arrangement. It is better, said they, to have salaried judges: and when a case arose, where pirates were to be liberated, the success was almost a certainty. *Ces gens là*, said most of the French, *font leurs affaires, pourquoi gêner leur métier?*—those people have their own pursuit, why interfere with it? Their accomplice and business agent in New Orleans was called Sauvinet (I have named him before), and also hailed from Bayonne. He had a counting-room in the suburb of Marigny, where he employed a bookkeeper, named Laporte, who worked for me in the years 1806 and 1807. When the pirate settlement in the island of Barataria had been

driven out by the American navy, Beluche, who afterwards entered the service of the young Venezuelan republic as a commodore, and a certain Dominique, took the piratical business into their own hands as an inheritance, by default of other heirs. The latter, a remarkably bold man, had been captured by the American revenue cutters, and when the English fleet, under Admirals Cochrane and Malcolm, appeared in the waters of Florida, was confined in the jail at New Orleans. Countless proofs of his piracies, even against American shipping, and of the coöperation of Beluche, who had escaped in time, were in the hands of the American government, and the gallows seemed unavoidable. Investigation had led to the discovery that Major St. Gème (referred to above), of our battalion, was Dominique's partner and go-between. This man was, like Sauvinet, in good circumstances, and owned several houses in the city. Dominique, in jail, and Sauvinet, outside of it, applied to Livingston, and made him their legal adviser and attorney. The sum offered to him, if he should succeed in procuring their liberation, of course could never be exactly ascertained. Common report throughout the city put it as high as 15,000 Spanish dollars. The overwhelming evidence against Dominique rendered his judicial release impossible; but his liberation, and the quashing of all further proceedings against him, St. Gème, Beluche, and all the rest who were suspected of being pirates, was brought about by Livingston, who resorted to the very simple means of getting Dominique and Beluche to offer their services to Jackson against the English, in the name of their bands, under condition that he would apply to the President of the United States for their pardon. Jackson was too keen not to see through Livingston's object at once; he had found in him a man who was not troubled by any scruples of conscience, and to whom, as to himself, all means were good that led to the accomplishment of an object. Moreover, good fighting men were wanted, and Livingston represented the advantages that were to be anticipated from the coöperation of these men, from their influence with the lower classes of the French population, from their intrepidity, and their skill in handling the heavier description of artillery, in such glowing colors, that the general at length gave his



consent, all the more readily that he was aware of the negotiations that the English adventurer, Edward Nicholas, had ere this been carrying on with them. The prison-door was thrown open to Dominique, Beluche presented himself, and in a few days the two received the command of a battery, which was afterwards called No. 3, and with which I was brought into close contact.

In the forenoon of December 23d, Jackson received the first intelligence of the landing of the British. The news was sent to him by the militia general Villeré, a sugar planter. Five or six hundred of the invading troops had landed on his estate, which they had reached by the small canal Villeré, flowing into Lac Borgne. A picket guard of young planters had been intrusted with the charge of watching the entrance to this small canal, although no one had thought it likely that the enemy would attempt to land there. These young gentlemen, persuaded that there was nothing to apprehend, meanwhile amused themselves in hunting through the neighboring woods, so that, during their absence, the English boats were enabled to pass unperceived up the channel, and land their troops. General Villeré discovered them, one morning when he went out to examine his sugar fields. The English had thus been on shore for three days before the fact was known in New Orleans. But Jackson's resolution was now taken. "We will," said he; "now give them a little taste of what they may expect! They shall find out whom they have to deal with!" When he heard the women and children crying for terror, in the streets, he ordered Livingston to tell them that "he was there, and that the British should never get into the city, so long as he held the command!"

In some accounts of that epoch, it is affirmed that the general, at once, arrested and imprisoned suspicious citizens; but such a thing was not thought of, as there was neither time nor occasion for the adoption of any such measure. The general was burning with impatience to come to close quarters with the *red coats*, as he called them. He wanted to fight. There was no computation of relative force, and not much idea of tactics, or plan. Jackson had bent all the strength of his will on one single point, and that was to meet, and drive off the *red coats*. "I will smash them,"

he would exclaim, "so help me God!" Two field-pieces, with the few companies of regulars, were at once ordered, under Captain Humphries, to pass down the only military road, which runs along the left bank of the Mississippi river, from and to the city. They were to proceed as far as Villeré's plantation, and were followed by the companies of sharp-shooters, under Beale, whose directions were to throw themselves into the thickets and low-woods, *cyprieres*, as they are termed; next to these came the 1200 riflemen from Tennessee, who had been provided with horses from all the neighboring plantations. These men joined Beale's command, and extended themselves through the woods, called *cyprieres*, which border all the plantations, until the mulatto-corps, which marched up after them, and formed their right wing, reached the extremity of their long line, and joined them. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, both the battalions stationed at Bayou St. John, received orders to come to the city, with all possible speed. They arrived about 4 o'clock, were immediately inspected before the Fort St. Charles, between the city and the suburb of Marygny, fully provided with powder and ball, and directed at once to follow the mounted Tennessee riflemen. It took these men more than an hour to file past, two by two, with their rifles in their hands and resting on their knee, each following the other step by step. Our Major, Planché, was very much agitated. He turned round to me and said, in almost piteous tone, "Alas! I scarcely feel that I have courage enough to lead fathers of families to battle!" But our Captain, Roche, who was "made of sterner stuff," and might be called a practiced soldier, rejoined: "Don't talk in that way, Major! Come now! that's not the kind of tone to use, at this time!" With these words, he wheeled about to us, and shouted:—"Come, lads! forward! Do your duty like brave fellows!" The Villeré plantation was about eight or nine miles from the city. We hurried towards it with a zeal, which, for inexperienced militia who had not yet smelt powder, might have been called almost heroic, had not Jackson's own example spurred us on, or had not many remained in careless ignorance of what awaited them. With our silent band of musicians in front, almost at a running pace, we reached Villeré's

plantation within about two hours, just as twilight was drawing on, and in profound silence; in advance of us, on the road, stood the two companies of regulars, headed by Captain Humphries, with his two field-pieces, and matches lit. The regulars were to have this small battery on their right wing, the battalion of New Orleans volunteers, *i. e.* the one to which I belonged, joining them, the mulatto corps, under Major Daquin, next to us,—the movement was to be made by echelons, thus forming a connected line with the Tennessee sharp-shooters, who had marched off to one side; the firing was not to commence until the battery had opened, and the regulars had set the example. At this moment, Captain Roche stepped in front and commanded "Sergeant Roche!" this was his brother. The latter advanced and was met by the Captain, who said, "Let us embrace, brother! It may be for the last time!" The request was complied with. Then came a second word of command, "Sergeant Roche!—to your post!" We had only completed our echelon march, and taken our positions for a few minutes, when the cannon roared; the return fire rapidly followed, and it was by the flash of the muskets that we, for the first time, got a sight of the red coats of the English, who were posted on a small acclivity in front of us, about a gun-shot distant. I noted this circumstance, and at the same moment observed the peculiar method of firing adopted by the English, who still kept up the old custom of three deep: one row of men half-kneeling, and two other ranks firing over their shoulders. This style of firing, along with the darkness of the evening, explained to me the reason why the enemy's balls, which we heard whistling by, mostly flew over our heads, and only seven men were wounded, five of them belonging to our own company. After the lapse of about twenty minutes, the word was passed to cease firing. On the English side only a few retreating discharges were dropped in, from time to time. We saw about sixty English captured by the Tennessee riflemen, and led off towards the road, and at the same time, learned that about one half of our own sharp-shooters, from the city, had fallen into the hands of the English. Their Captain, Beale, a great braggart, who was the ally and friend of my miserable enemy, Saul, had



completely disappeared, so that he was supposed to be dead ; for that he would hide, and leave his little command in the lurch, as was afterwards ascertained, no one at that moment believed ; but not one of these volunteers was really shot, excepting Parmlee, a merchant.

The night was very cold. Wearied by our long march, and standing in the open field, we all wanted to make a fire, and at length, at the special request of our major, permission to kindle one was obtained. Within twenty minutes we saw innumerable watchfires blazing up in a line extending, like a crescent, from the shores of the Mississippi to the woods, and stretching far away behind the plantations of Villeré, Lacoste, and others, occupied by the English, on whose minds, as well as on our own, the impression must have been produced, that Jackson had many more troops under his command and near the spot than any one had supposed. Shortly before daybreak an order came for a general retreat, which our battalion was to cover, and which was to be made in the same order as we observed in assuming our position on the field—Humphries' field-pieces in front, then the regulars ; behind them the mulatto corps, followed by the mounted riflemen, and our battalion bringing up the rear. About three o'clock in the morning we halted, and, as the sun rose, we found ourselves about a mile and a half distant from the little battle-field, and on the plantation of Mr. E. Macarty, where we took up position in the same order as on the previous evening behind the small canal that leads from the military road to the woods or *cyprières* which border the shores of Lac Borgne. General Jackson occupied the planter's house as his head-quarters. Our company was stationed at a distance of about 180 steps from it, on the canal. Measures were immediately taken to form intrenchments ; *i. e.*, the ground along the canal was thrown up in a sort of parapet or breastwork, to cover the little army. I now, for the first time, learned from my friends, who surrounded the general's person, what had occurred during the night. It had been Jackson's anxious desire to renew at daybreak the conflict, which night had interrupted, and to attack the British vigorously. But he learned, from scouts, that the English Major-General Keane, who commanded the 1200

men first disembarked, had received a reinforcement of 3500 men. Jackson was, nevertheless, as much as ever disposed to assail the English, with his small force of inexperienced militia, but his aide, Livingston, very prudently advised him to consult Major St. G  me. The latter had gone about a good deal with Moreau, when the latter visited New Orleans a few years before, and had examined its situation with the critical eye of a tactician ; had studied its capabilities for defence in case of a hostile attack, and, hence, was peculiarly fitted to give Jackson some excellent advice. This he did, and had the great merit of making Jackson comprehend that Keane, with his 6,000 men, would, in the open field, surround, defeat, and capture him and his small force of raw levies, who had not much more of the soldier about them than the mere name ; he then pointed out the Macarty canal or channel, so called, behind which we had assumed position, as the very spot that Moreau himself had indicated as the best one adapted to a defence of the city, particularly by unpractised troops. Jackson listened to this advice, and, highly as we may prize the merit of his unwearied energy, perseverance, and intrepidity, his self-command upon this occasion is worthy of still loftier praise, as it was a quality which he did not always exhibit during the course of his life ; nor must we forget the keen-sightedness that ever distinguished him, when, as in this case, his own inclinations and passions had to yield to the dictates of calm, calculating reason. He felt that his reputation was at stake—a reputation which he had still to establish, and, consequently, could not trifle with, excepting at the risk of meeting with a fate similar in some respects to that of the unfortunate General Hull, at the beginning of the war ; a vicissitude which Jackson's haughty and impatient spirit could scarcely have endured. What obligations, however, the whole country, the State of Louisiana, and particularly the inhabitants of the city, owe to Edward Livingston, the author of its criminal Code, for this sage advice, my readers will be able to judge for themselves, and posterity cannot, without injustice, ignore. I have elsewhere remarked that this accomplished statesman and jurist did not possess the quality of valor, and it consequently awakened the astonishment of every one, when he, on the evening

of the 23d, and through the ensuing night, appeared on horseback, among the whizzing bullets of the British, and seemed by no means an inactive combatant. This was the first, but also the last time he exposed himself, in a similar manner.

On Christmas Day, December 25th, 1814, about 7 o'clock in the morning, we perceived that a small battery of 24-pounders had been put up by the English, on the road skirting the shore and opposite to the little revenue schooner *Carolina*, which they had been firing into on the preceding evening. This, as we afterwards learned from the British dispatches, had been done under the direction of Admiral Malcolm, the second officer in command of the fleet. He was at the battery in person, and, without loss of time, directed so hot and well-aimed a cannonade at the schooner, that we saw it blow up, in about twenty minutes. While this was transpiring, the English made a very feeble demonstration on the high road, but again fell back. On board of the schooner was the commander of the whole station, my intimate friend, Captain Daniel T. Patterson, now dead; he had left the doomed craft a few moments before the flames reached her magazine, and at once repaired on board of the *Louisiana*, a small corvette, with an armament of about 16 guns. This vessel had grounded in a shallow, but could sweep the road with her fire, as the Mississippi is scarcely half a mile wide, at that point.

The Legislature was, just at this time, holding its sessions in the city. Jackson had openly declared that he would imitate the example of the Russians at Moscow, and consign the whole city to the flames, should he not be able to defend it, for he was determined the English should reap no profit from their success. Several members of the Assembly had talked together about this menace, in the antechamber of the State House, and had consulted together whether it would not be better, should the British prove too strong, to surrender the city, than to have it destroyed in the way proposed; but, no formal deliberation had taken place. However, Jackson, who had heard what was going on, authorized Governor William C. Claiborne to arrest any of the members who should be heard advocating such a course, in case the deliberation were had. The Governor was no friend of Jackson's: he



feared his superiority, and followed his orders, only, because resistance was impossible. Jackson, who would not tolerate any evasion, dictatorially ordered the Governor, who was a weak, intriguing, spiritless man, more concerned about his personal popularity than for anything else, to make no exception, but to disperse the Assembly, and Claiborne obeyed with visible reluctance, as if he would say: "You see, gentlemen, it is not my fault," and closed the doors of the Legislative Hall.

A general order was now issued, requiring every one who had superfluous arms in his possession, to bring them to the arsenal, and all able-bodied men, between the ages of eighteen and fifty to hold themselves in readiness for military service. No distinction whatever was made between regular inhabitants of the city and strangers who had just come down the river and lodged in the various taverns. These were armed and enrolled in the second regiment Louisiana militia; but were not disciplined. Among them was a Scotch merchant, Andrew Milne by name, of the house of H. Munro and Co., and resident of New Orleans, where he had remained in the quality of a British subject; this man now saw himself compelled to bear arms against his own countrymen, and subjects of the same government.

On the morning after our retreat from the plantation of Villeré, where we had attacked the British on the preceding evening, attempts, as I have already stated, were made to throw up a preast-work along the Macarty canal. The whole soil, in that neighborhood, consists of soft marshy ground, and when you have dug to the depth of three feet, you find nothing but mud and water. Hence, when the effort was made to make an intrenchment around the camp, and to erect the five or six redoubts which were to have been raised along the Macarty canal, the miriness of the soil rendered all exertions utterly fruitless. A French engineer then suggested to Jackson the idea of filling up the hollowed redoubts with cotton-bales, laid, to the depth of three or four, one above the other: the wooden platforms which were to sustain the heavy cannon which had been dragged from the arsenal, could then be placed upon the cotton-bales, and there secured, while the crenellated openings on both sides of the redoubt could

be constructed with six or eight bales fastened to the main-body of the redoubt by iron rings, and covered with adhesive earth. After the retreat of the English, we heard that they had thought of a similar device; but, as they could find no cotton, they had used the sugar in casks which they had picked up on the various plantations. Jackson, who at once adopted the plan, was anxious to lose no time. It was intimated to him, that, in the city, he could procure plenty of cotton, at from seven to eight cents per pound; but, that it would cost a whole day to bring it to the spot: he was then told that not far from the camp, and in the rear of his position, there lay a bark in the stream laden with cotton, for Havana: the name of this vessel was the Pallas, unless my memory, after the lapse of thirty-eight years, deceives me, and she was to have sailed before the arrival of the British force. Her cargo consisted of 245 bales, which I had shipped previously to the invasion, and the remainder, about sixty bales, belonged to the Spaniard, named Fernando Alzar, resident at New Orleans. It was only when the cotton had been brought to the camp, and they were proceeding to lay the first bales in the redoubt, that the marks struck my attention, and I recognized my own property. Adjutant Livingston, who had been my usual legal counsel at New Orleans, that same evening inspected Battery No. 3, where the men were arranging some bales. I was somewhat vexed at the idea of their taking cotton of the best sort, and worth from ten to eleven cents, out of a ship already loaded and on the point of sailing, instead of procuring the cheaper kind, which was to be had in plenty throughout the suburbs of the city, at seven or eight cents, and said as much to Livingston. He, who was never at a loss for a reply, at once answered: "Well, Mr. Nolte, if this is your cotton, you, at least, will not think it any hardship to defend it." This anecdote, which was first related by myself, gave rise to the story that Jackson, when a merchant was complaining of the loss of his cotton, had ordered a sergeant to hand the gentleman a rifle, with the remark: "No one can defend these cotton-bales better than their owners can, and I hope that you will not leave the spot!"

The line of redoubts, running from the shore to the Cyprieries,

which extended forwards from our left wing to the rear of the English camp, gave shelter to about 1500 men. The whole left wing, by the Cyprieres, was covered with the picked men of Jackson's Tennessee rifle corps. These marksmen had thrown themselves in, among the thickest of the Cyprieres, and had cut narrow openings in every direction, so as to get fair sight, and in these openings they quietly rested their rifles in such a way that they could, to use their own expression, bring down every "redcoat who showed himself within range of their unerring weapons." There could be no pleasanter or more useful way of passing the time, these sharpshooters thought, than in practising their skill upon the enemy's sentinels and outposts, at sunset, and by the first dawn of morning. Even in the night-time, the English post had to be resupplied. How often at sunrise did the invaders find as many corpses stretched on the ground as they had sentinels stationed there, the preceding night!

Some attempts were made to establish a second line of redoubts to the rear of Jackson's first position: but these did not succeed. At this point were placed the unarmed Kentucky volunteers, who had come down the river, and, as already intimated, the undisciplined second regiment of Louisiana militia. Communication was by no means cut off between the two lines, no matter how many stories may be told about the second line remaining in complete ignorance of what the first was doing. On the contrary, it was easy to obtain permission from the commanding officers, at any time to visit an acquaintance in the second line, or even in the city. It could not long remain unknown to the English that Jackson had his headquarters in Macarty's house, but the shots they directed against it did very little damage. The house was still standing in the year 1838, when I visited it, and saw the cannon-balls still embedded in its walls, where the owners had, in their enthusiasm, caused them to be gilt, in the year 1822.

At sunrise, on New Year's Day, 1815, both camps were covered by a heavy fog. Through the night we heard a deadened hammering from the English quarters, and when about 8 o'clock the mist began to dissipate, a fearful cannonade commenced upon



us. They had brought heavy guns from the fleet, and had erected large batteries of twenty-four and twenty-six pounders. The largest British battery had directed its fire against the battery of the pirates Dominique and Beluche, who had divided our company into two parts, and were supplied with ammunition by it. Once, as Dominique was examining the enemy through a glass, a cannon shot wounded his arm; he caused it to be bound up, saying, "I will pay them for that!" and resumed his glass. He then directed a twenty-four pounder, gave the order to fire, and the ball knocked an English gun-carriage to pieces, and killed six or seven men. Our company lost that day but one man, our least, a French hatter, called Laborde. For predestinarians I would mention that the young notary, Philippe Peddesclaux, was standing exactly in front of Laborde, and the latter would not have been hit had he not been bending forward at the moment to light his cigar by my neighbor, St. Avit's. When the latter turned he saw Laborde's scattered brains and prostrate body. The flash of a gun reaches the eye long before the report gets to the ear, and thus the ball can sometimes be avoided. I have watched both the flash and the report, and I have seen the best tried soldiers, both officers and men, even the utterly fearless Jackson himself, getting out of the way of the Congreve rockets, which were sent in great quantities from the British camp, and which were particularly abundant on the morning of the eighth of January. Others, again, either actuated by a different principle, or less prudently observant of danger and less anxious to avoid it, like my friend St. Avit for instance, remained, confident in their fate, in the same position, and stood quietly, as if all the roar of the cannon and the hissing of missiles about their ears, was entirely without interest for them.

On this day, which saw our whole line, except the batteries, exposed to the fire from 8 o'clock A. M. to 3 o'clock P. M., my worthy friend, Major Carmick, who commanded the volunteer battalion, and was near the pirates' battery, was struck by a Congreve rocket on the forehead, knocked off his horse, and both his arms injured. I asked leave to accompany him to the guard-house, and as we reached the low garden-wall behind Jackson's

headquarters, I saw to my great amazement two of the General's volunteer adjutants, Duncan the lawyer, and District Marshal Duplessis, lying flat on the ground to escape the British balls. Livingston was invisible—writing and reading of proclamations kept him out of sight. The General, during this five hours cannonade, was constantly riding from one wing to the other, accompanied by his usual military aids, Reed and Butler, and the two advocates, Grymes and Davezac. Only four of the Tennessee riflemen were left in the wood.

The first week of the new year was occupied in strengthening our defences, and it was particularly ordered to have plenty of ammunition in readiness. The munitions were in charge of Gov. Claiborne, who was so frightened that he could scarcely speak. On the first of January ammunition was wanting at batteries Nos. 1 and 2. Jackson sent in a fury for Claiborne, who was with the second division, and said to him, "By the Almighty God, if you do not send me balls and powder instantly, I shall chop off your head, and have it rammed into one of those field-pieces."

On the 8th of January the battle took place which compelled the English to resign all hope of attacking the city, and to retire. The reader will remember that on the evening of the 23d of December half of the volunteer corps, thirty in number, had been taken prisoners; among them were Story and Robert Montgomery, merchants, and Porter, the lawyer. The same evening they were questioned by Major General Keane, about the strength of Jackson's forces, and then taken to the fleet before Dolphin Island, and to the admiral's ship; where the Commander-in-Chief, Pakenham, a brother-in-law of Wellington, and for some time head of his staff, in the Spanish Peninsular, examined them anew in presence of Admiral Cochrane. They would give but one answer—that Jackson had under him about 30,000 men—12,000 in Mobile and the rest in the neighborhood of the city: for he had said, before the arrival of the British, with one or more oaths, "I'll flog them, so help me God." The prisoners were examined separately, but all gave the same answer. It was no wonder, then, that the semi-circle of watch-fires in the rear of the English camp appeared to General Keane to confirm these statements.

He could not suppose but that all these watch-fires were surrounded by troops. Thus, a mere carelessness became of great advantage; and the English believed that they were opposed to at least 15,000, although in truth there were not more than half that number. They knew, from deserters from our line, that what regulars Jackson had were in the right wing, and that the left was composed of militia. As the report of Major Gen. Lambert afterwards proved, Pakenham determined to attack with three columns; of which the smallest, of 800 men, was commanded by Major Rennie, and was to make a demonstration only against the redoubt facing the British left wing. The centre column, under General Gibbs, numbered 4000 men, and the right wing 6000—which ought easily to have overthrown the undrilled militia, and attacked Jackson in the rear. At the same time, 1000 men, under Colonel Thompson, were to cross the river, drive the Americans from their defences on the right bank, and so fall upon the rear of the American left. Two rockets from the camp were to give the signal for the march of the columns, and the attacks were to be simultaneous, so soon as the signal should be answered by Col. Thompson, from the right bank of the river. This plan was arranged on the 6th of January, at Pakenham's head-quarters, in Mr. Villere's house, and on that day, Epiphany, the three generals dined together. One of the guests was the American planter, Delaronde, Major-General of the militia of his parish, who had visited the English, on their landing. They supposed him to be inimical to the American government, and therefore spoke freely before him, and drank to the toast of "Booty and Beauty," as they had heard of the great beauty of the fair Louisianians. Delaronde returned at night to his plantation, and at daybreak crossed the river in a canoe, and travelled, most of the way on foot, to the American defences; he reached Jackson's camp about 1 o'clock, P. M., and told the whole plan to the general. Jackson instantly took energetic measures for stubborn resistance. The position of the second division was a few hundred steps behind the first. Only a few of these men were armed. My friend, Commodore Patterson, who had been attending Jackson's council of war, but who had returned on board the frigate Louisiana, came to me about four



in the afternoon, called me from my post, and shaking hands with me, said, "I expect you will see some fun between this and to-morrow."

After the cannonade, January 1, night service in the defences was trusted to half companies by turns. But this evening Jackson ordered the entire troops to lie upon their arms. A little before sunset he visited the whole line, looking occasionally at a musket to see if it were loaded. "Don't fire till you see the whites of their eyes, and if you want to sleep, sleep upon your arms." Only a few were prepared for the morrow's tragedy, among whom was myself, thanks to Commodore Patterson's information. A little before daybreak two rockets were sent up from the British camp, the meaning of which not many understood. Then as the mist arose we saw the British host marching slowly towards us in three columns. The first company of the middle column carried storming ladders and fascines, with muskets slung at their backs. The redoubt upon the highway on the right shore was first reached by the little division commanded by Major Rennie, who was the first to mount it, sword in hand, and as he shouted "Come, my boys, the day is ours!" he was pierced by three bullets, and met the death of a brave gentleman. It was about half-past 8, A. M. Our whole line kept up a heavy uninterrupted fire, and as there was a dead calm in the atmosphere the smoke soon formed itself into thick clouds, and we scarcely saw the British mounting the redoubt at the right. On the left wing Jackson had posted the best of the Kentucky riflemen, lately arrived, under General Adair, the same who had been arrested in 1807 as a fellow conspirator of Aaron Burr's. They stood in five close lines, kneeling to load and rising to fire; their rifles being loaded with two or three buckshot besides the ball. The heaviest firing was of course here. The *Cyprières* were filled with riflemen, who were protected by the thick bushes, and dealt death from behind them to the British platoons, whose officers were falling fast but who saw no enemy. The whole right of the British column was mowed down by these invisible riflemen, and their front was exposed to the fire of both our batteries. Now and then, as the smoke rose we could see them flying, throwing away musket and fascine,

while a staff-officer, mounted on a black-charger, strove to drive them back with the chapeau which he held in his hand. At last, riddled by bullets, he fell backwards from his horse and a soldier caught him and bore him away. We learned in the evening that it was General Pakenham in person. An Irish regiment, the 44th, fled with its colonel, M. Mullins, at the head; and he was afterwards tried by court-martial in Havana, and cashiered for cowardice. Upon the left wing, as I have already remarked at the commencement of this description, Major Renie and no less than eighty of his men had lost their lives, in a gallant although ineffectual attempt to mount the redoubt. After an hour at least had elapsed, the firing ceased—the field of slaughter was covered with the bodies of British soldiers, lying either dead or wounded. I called it the field of slaughter; for it really was slaughter, and not battle as on an open plain where foe meets foe; for here the British troops were perfectly exposed to the deadly and accurate bullets of our riflemen; and the latter were entirely invisible, being not only protected but absolutely hidden from view, either by the thickets of undergrowth and bushes or by the parapets and breastwork of the entrenchments. In the distance we could see the retreating English troops, concealing themselves behind the shrubbery, or throwing themselves into the ditches and gullies. In some of the latter indeed they lay so thickly that they were only distinguishable in the distance by the white shoulder belts, which formed a line along the top of their hiding place.

About two o'clock they sent a flag of truce demanding time to bury the dead belonging to both armies. Jackson sent naval lieutenant Crawley with the proud words that he had no dead to bury, but that the British might have truce until the next forenoon. On his return Mr. Crawley reported that Generals Pakenham and Gibbs had fallen; that General Keane was dangerously wounded, and General Lambert was now Commander-in-chief. The British left 700 dead upon the field, and had as many wounded, of whom we took some eighty prisoners; six hundred more had thrown away their arms and fled. I was present for a while when they were trying to recognize the bodies, and when they found

that of Major Whittaker the soldiers burst into tears, saying, "Ah, poor Major Whittaker! he is gone, the worthy fellow." The American loss was but 9 killed and 19 wounded, a scarcely credible number, were it not for so many eyewitnesses, and for the fact that the Americans were all hidden behind bushes or parapets.

The Americans in war are peculiar. In Napoleon's day, the French fought for the "glory of the great Nation." Now, perhaps, they fight for "the glory of our arms." The British fight for "king and country," or "God and country;" but the Americans "for the good of my country." After the peace, an officer in this war, the Marquis of Tweeddale, who was taken prisoner on the Canadian frontier and brought to New York, said to me: "I hope it will never fall to my lot again to fight Americans; every one of them always fights his own individual battle, and is a most dangerous enemy."

On the right bank matters went otherwise. Col. Thompson had been delayed with his boats by the sudden falling of the river in the night, owing to the cold weather, and he did not reach the shore until the fight on the left wing was over. Before the half finished defences lay about one thousand unarmed Kentuckians, and some hundreds of undisciplined militia of the first regiment of New Orleans, under their Colonel, a grocer named Dejean, who had brought the flag with him, and had it in his tent. As Thompson appeared, the Kentuckians ran; the militia followed, and forgot their flag, which now hangs among the trophies taken by Wellington in the Peninsular war, in the Chapel of Whitehall, with this inscription: "Taken at the Battle of New Orleans, 8th January, 1815." Thompson, who saw what was going on in the left wing, returned to the camp. Jackson, Grymes and Davezac remained near the left wing. During the fight the others were invisible.

After the military council of the 7th, Livingston had retired to the city on pretence of a violent colic, I, myself, who was sergeant, commanding the piquette, had the honor of opening the barrier for him. There he remained until next day, in his dressing-gown, upon the balcony of his house, until he heard of Jackson's suc-



cess, when the colic left him and he re-appeared in the camp. His comrade, Duncan, who quit the camp at daybreak on the 8th, to look for reinforcements, rode about the streets at a gallop as long as the fight lasted, crying out, "Up! up! the foe is upon us. To the field! To the field!" All active people were in the field. A corps of *veterans*, many of whom had not yet seen thirty years, guarded the Bank and Arsenal. My heroic antagonist, Mr. Cashier Saul, already frequently named in these volumes, had, as the story goes, for the truth of which I do not however vouch, the greatest possible difficulty in restraining his warlike ardor. Indeed an order, obtained by his friend Duncan from General Jackson, was found absolutely necessary to keep him in town, where his presence was essential to the safety of the Bank.

I would not have spoken of these casual instances of cowardice, were it not for the fact, that in the report of this battle, contained in the dispatches of General Jackson to the President of the United States, and which were drawn up by Livingston himself, the General thanks his staff and his military and *volunteer adjutants*, for their *cool and deliberate bravery*. When I first saw this paragraph, it was impossible for me to suppress the thought of what a queer look Duncan and Livingston must have exchanged, when they read it together—those two birds of a feather—those two scoundrels who played so well into each other's hands.

For eight days we heard no more of the British army. A scouting party, under Adjutant Grymes, brought word that they were erecting redoubts, and that the sugar-fields were full of riflemen.

Jackson wanted another fight, but he had prudence enough to follow Livingston's patriotic counsel. "What do you want more," said he; "your object is gained—the city is saved—the British have retired. For the pleasure of a blow or two, will you risk against those fearless troops your handful of men, composed of the best and worthiest citizens, and rob so many families of their heads!" The General was guided by this remonstrance. On the 16th General Lambert sent a messenger to say that the British army was about to re-embark and to beg kind treatment for eighty-four wounded left behind. One of these, an

Irishman, who had lost both legs, rejoiced over it. He could not live, he said, on the pension granted for the loss of one limb, but having fortunately lost both, "I shall live now," he said, "like a prince." Eighty of these suffered amputation in our City Hospital, and not one died; while of eighty-one British prisoners, who suffered the same operation, not one survived. A Mr. Lawson, brother-in-law of District Judge Lewis, and belonging to our corps, lost his right arm and died. When this was announced to the American field-surgeon Campbell, he said: "Bad luck! I took more than ordinary pains with him. With those British prisoners, you know it was a case of plain sailing, a right to cut off."

It is true that no comparison is fair between the British surgeons, educated under Wellington, in many a long and varied campaign, and the improvised American surgeons, who were picked up wherever they could be found, and the most of whom had had no further experience than that which they had obtained in an apothecary's shop.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### RETURN OF OUR SMALL ARMY INTO THE CITY.

The first news of the peace concluded at Ghent, December 24th, 1814—Martial law in New Orleans—Jackson's violent measures—The arbitrary course pursued by him toward myself—Characteristic traits—Source of his hatred to the National Bank—The peace rejoicings in the city—Present to Mrs. Jackson—Fitting out of the ship *Horatio*—Renewal of my quarrel with Mr. Shields—Effect of my publication of the correspondence between him and myself—Another and unfortunate duel with the son of Mr. Saul—Arrival of intelligence from Paris, announcing Napoleon's entry into that capital—Prudential arrangements in relation to the cargo of the ship *Horatio*, on board of which I finally embark.

ON January 19, Jackson brought back our little army to the city. A *Te Deum* was sung in the cathedral, at the doors of which the most prominent of the Catholic clergy received the general, and Madame Livingston, with studied enthusiasm, did herself the pleasure of setting a laurel crown upon his head, which, however, the destroyer of Indians, unused to similar marks of honor, somewhat unwillingly put away. The retreat of the English had drawn away many negroes from the sugar plantations of C. Macarty, Villeré, Delaronde, Lacoste, and others, and they were now on board the fleet. Jackson sent his adjutant, Livingston, and a merchant, by the name of R. D. Shepherd, to Admiral Cochrane, to demand the slaves. These two ambassadors returned from the fleet early in the morning of January 21, and brought to General Jackson the official news of the treaty which had been concluded on the 24th December, 1814, at Ghent, between the American and English ministers. The English commanders, Cochrane and Pakenham, received this news by a swift frigate in twenty-three days, with orders to cease all hostilities, and to return. This news was,



as one may see, *official*, on the English side, but Jackson refused to acknowledge it as such until instructed by his own government in Washington. He dared not, however, doubt much about it, inasmuch as Cochrane, who had informed Livingston of his instructions, was a good friend of the adjutant. They had been acquaintances in New York, and Cochrane had taken a wife from the very numerous Livingston family. But the arbitrary and now utterly unnecessary martial law, which *had never for one moment been needed* since the English came to Louisiana, pleased Jackson so much that he could not willingly abrogate it.

Livingston and Shepherd had brought from the fleet, and given to Cotten, editor of the Louisiana Gazette, Lord Bathurst's (then Secretary for Foreign Affairs) official announcement to the Lord Mayor of London, which contained a copy of the preliminary articles settled at Ghent. Cotten at once printed, and put into circulation, handbills containing the following:—

“A truce-boat from Admiral Cochrane, commander of the English fleet, has just brought to General Jackson, official news of a treaty concluded at Ghent, between the United States and Great Britain, and the request for a cessation of hostilities.”

The next day the editor received the following order from head-quarters:—

“SIR:—It is expected that you will give immediate publicity to the enclosed, by printing it in handbills, as you have printed that which this is meant to counteract, and also by inserting it in your next paper.

JOHN REED, *Aid-de-Camp*.

“MR. COTTEN, *Editor Louisiana Gazette*.”

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“*Head-Quarters 7th Military District,* }  
NEW ORLEANS, February 21, 1815. }

“SIR:—As the commander-in-chief has been informed of the announcement which has appeared in your paper, as follows—  
‘A truce-boat from Admiral Cochrane, commander of the English fleet, has just brought to General Jackson, official news of a

treaty concluded at Ghent, between the United States and Great Britain, and the request for a cessation of hostilities'—he requests that you will hasten to destroy every copy of so *unauthorized and improper a notice*. No direct or practical request for a truce has been received from the commanders of the British land and sea forces.

“The letter from Bathurst to the Lord Mayor, which contains the only official news as yet received, by no means declares that such truce is to take place, until the treaty be signed by the Commissioners, and ratified by the Prince Regent and the President of the United States.

[Here the letter adduces some common arguments, and closes as follows] :—

“It is expected, that in future no kind of publication, which resembles the foregoing and blamable one, will be made, until the editor shall be convinced of its correctness, and shall be permitted, by the *proper authority*, to publish it in his sheet.

“JOHN REED, *Aid-de-Camp*.

“MR. COTTEN, *Editor Louisiana Gazette*.”

When this letter was given to the editor he was officially informed, that New Orleans existed only as a battle-field, and that the word of the commander-in-chief was the only law. It is clear that the even momentary resignation of his command, of which some ignorant chroniclers have spoken, was not even thought of by the general. On the contrary, it was at this time that Jackson ordered, that the city of New Orleans and all its environs, from the frontier line, two miles up, to the encampment, seven miles below, upon the river, should be considered as his camp, and that none might claim authority within its limits—he being the only commander. The late William C. Claiborne, who alone would have opposed this, was so frightened, that he did not dare raise his voice, nor do his duty ; but, in the most fainthearted way, left the civil authority to take care of itself.

When Jackson brought back our little army into the city, he

left a few men behind him in the intrenchments. He had chosen them out of those militia whom he had forcibly taken out of the taverns, where they were staying as travelling strangers, in order to punish them, he said, for having spoken so fiercely against the military service. Among them were many Frenchmen, who were not even citizens, and who were torn from their daily business, their wives, and their families. An appeal was made in writing to the French Consul, Toussard, who waited upon General Jackson, and notified him that he had received orders, from the Minister at Washington, to extend his protection over the French subjects. The consul also asked, whether he might communicate with the Frenchmen then in the intrenchments, and free them from this military service. The general said yes, and Colonel Toussard immediately had his requisition printed. There were forty men in all. Then Jackson arrested Colonel Toussard, with the forty Frenchmen; and, forty days after the news of peace had been received, on the fifth of March, sent them, not only out of the limits of the camp, but off to the interior plantations, not nearer than Baton Rouge.

The deputy, Louaillier, a native Frenchman, but naturalized in America, and member of the Legislative Assembly, published a letter in the Journals, in which he remarked upon this high-handed measure of General Jackson's, that the permission and safe-guard given to Col. Toussard was in direct opposition to this arbitrary step: "For," "said he, "if the general were not content to allow the Frenchmen to be released, why did he empower the French consul to make a requisition for his countrymen, or even to visit them; or with what motive did he himself, sign the certificate of release." This argument did not trouble the general; he simply arrested Louaillier and confined him in the barracks, to be tried for exciting mutiny in the camp, by a court-martial. Mr. A. Hall, Judge of the U. S. District Court, a fearless man, immediately issued a writ of *habeas corpus* to liberate the person of M. Louaillier. This was his duty as highest judicial officer in the State. The general at once arrested Judge Hall, and sent him outside of the camp lines, into the country, with the notification that his authority was at an end. All this, as has been



already said, occurred six weeks after reception of the news of the treaty at Ghent, which no one in the city for an instant doubted to be true, simply to gratify a lust for despotic power, and without one word of remonstrance from the mouth of the man who knew the Codex of the United States better than any other person,—Edward Livingston.

At the end of Jackson's proclamation of March 5, 1815, were these words:—"All and every officer and soldier is hereby strictly commanded to give the earliest possible information about all mutinies, or contemplated mutinies, all inducements to desert, or attempts to desert or to mutiny; and to arrest all persons implicated therein, that they may be brought to court-martial."

This command concerned only the officers and soldiers. But I must tell at least one anecdote in proof of the entire submission of the general's satellites to his will. My partner, Mr. Hollander, was at the door of the Bank Coffee-House, conversing about Louaillier's letter, and praising it, and its writer's courage. "Why," said he, "did General Jackson allow Col. Toussard to print his requisition in the Journals, when he had no intention to free the Frenchmen from military service?" "Ah," replied a bystander, "his only idea was to find out all who were disposed to side with the consul, in order that he might punish them." "It was a dirty trick," said Hollander. This answer was carried to the general, who immediately ordered the arrest and trial of Hollander, because, "he excited insubordination and mutiny in the camp, and talked disrespectfully of his superior officer." Just as Hollander and I were dining together on the next day, my house was surrounded by a hundred men, and Major Davezac,—so often mentioned,—with squinting eye and golden epaulettes, stalked in to arrest and carry off Hollander. I went at once to Adjutant Livingston, to procure the liberation of my friend, and he persuaded the general to accept my bail for \$2,000, for the future appearance of Hollander, before the court-martial. Livingston himself drew up the bond, and no man in the United States knew how to do it better, so that the sum mentioned never could be demanded by law from the bailer. A couple of days

later a council of war was called. Hollander was present, and Davezac, as representative of the general, was accuser; but the next day, March 13, the ratification of the treaty of Ghent arrived, and put an end to the farce. Jackson issued a proclamation, *pardoned* Judge Hall, Louaillier, Hollander, and all others who had interfered with his authority, and so laid down his power. But he ruled with arbitrary and despotic power for fifty days after there was the slightest use or necessity for martial law at all.

This was scarcely ended when sixty of the citizens united to form a cavalcade, which should escort Judge Hall publicly, from his place of exile to the court-house. Of all the lawyers in the city, Livingston, Duncan, Hennius, and others, only one, Mr. Grymes, joined this manifestation, and he marched at the head of the troop, although he too, had been an adjutant of the general, and although Hall had determined on the re-opening of his court to cite Jackson to appear and answer the charges of interference with civil authority, and contempt of court and the writ of habeas corpus. This happened immediately. Jackson appeared and was fined \$1,000, which he paid in one bank note; then bowed to the Judge, and left the court. He found at the threshold Davezac with his friends, Dominique, Beluche, and the whole band of liberated pirates, fifty in number. They lifted the general upon their shoulders and bore him triumphantly to the Exchange Coffee-House. American citizens blushed to see this procession, and the general himself seemed to dislike it, and to find himself as uncomfortable as Madame Livingston's laurel crown had made him at the church door. By the suggestion of lawyer Duncan, his nephew, Nicholson, an understrapper in Hall's court, carried a subscription list about the town the next day to make up the amount of the general's fine; and in order to make the subscription appear to be the unanimous voice of the citizens, in condemnation of the fine, it was resolved that no man should subscribe more than one dollar. The collector started, and out of the necessary \$1,000, he succeeded in accumulating \$160. My captain, Roche, who commanded the battalion of New Orleans Carabineers, to whom I belonged, was visited by young

Nicholson. "If the general," replied the gentleman; "is in need of money I will lend him willingly, to the best of my ability, but I will not give a sixpence for such a farce as this." Nicholson assured him that it was not his dollar but his signature that was wanted.

There was a certain peculiar might of will in Jackson's character and dictatorialness that had become a second nature in him, and to convince him of the injustice of any act contemplated or performed by him, was impossible. The two examples following will prove this :—

Marched out from the city on December 16, I had quitted the camp but once. On this occasion I learned from my housekeeper that during my absence, a military command had come to my house, where the officer peremptorily demanded the key of the warehouses. Hereupon, they seized all the woollen goods that I had brought from Pensacola, and carried them off, leaving me a receipt therefor. This receipt was signed by a name that I had never heard of, belonging to the Tennessee sharp-shooters. It was for the clothing of these sharp-shooters that they had taken the woollen goods. Immediately after the retreat of the English, Jackson had named a commission, consisting of his quartermasters and two merchants, who were looked to for the provision of the army, and to whom all who had had any property taken away, were to complain. My claim was a double one, first, for 750 woollen coverings, taken out of my warerooms; second, for 250 bales of cotton taken from the brigantine Pallas. For the first I received the price that was current on the day that the landing of the English was announced, \$11 per pair. All settlements required the general's ratification and signature. On this occasion he gave both, but with the remark that, as my goods had been taken to cover the Tennessee troops, I should be paid in Tennessee bank notes, upon which there was a discount of nearly 10 per cent. I was silent. With regard to the claim for the 250 bales which had been used for fortifications, I produced my books. Two years before they had been purchased from the richest cotton planter, Poydras, at 10 cents. The price meanwhile, had never been less than 10 to 11 cents, and the day before we received the news of



their seizure, I had bought two small lots at  $11\frac{1}{2}$  and 12 cents. Interest for two years at 5 per cent. and storage had been added to my claim. On the day of our march from the city, just as I had put on my uniform and taken my musket, a broker ran after me to offer me a lot which *must* be sold that day, because the owner feared that they would fall into the hands of the English. "Offer something, Mr. Nolte," said the broker. I had not the heart to offer 50 per cent. lower than the price, and therefore, offered 7 cents, more with the view of getting rid of the broker than of speculating. In a few moments he came back, notes in hand, and said, "Mr. Nolte, the cotton is yours." There was no time to deliver it, however, for we were obliged to march. This little affair was spoken of at Jackson's head-quarters, as a proof of my trust in a fortunate result of the hostilities. When the commission laid my claim before the general, he said that the price was too high; that I must be paid at the price on the day of the march from the city. I made a written protest but the general would not notice it. Then I determined to call on him in the hopes of awakening a sense of justice in him. He heard me but that was all. "Are you not lucky," he asked, "to have saved the rest of your cotton by my defence?" "Certainly, general," I said, "as lucky as any body else in the city whose cotton has been thus saved. But the difference between me and the rest is, that all the others have nothing to pay and that I have to bear all the loss." "Loss," said the general, getting excited, "why, you have saved *all*." I saw that argument was useless with so stiff-necked a man, and remarked to him that I only wanted compensation for my cotton, and that the best compensation would be to give me precisely the quantity that had been taken from me, and of the same quality; that he might name one merchant and I another, who should buy and deliver to me the cotton; and that he should pay the bill. "No, no, sir," he answered, "I like straight-forward business, and this is too complicated. You must take 6 cents for your cotton. I have nothing more to say." As I again endeavored to explain, he said, "Come sir, come, take a glass of whisky and water, you must be d—d dry after all your arguing." For me there remained

nothing but to say : " Well general, I did not expect such injustice at your hands. Good morning, sir," and so to go away. Three days after, came the news of the treaty of Ghent, and cotton rose at once to 16 cents, at which price I bought several lots. The commission for the regulation of claims for loss and damages were rather embarrassed now to offer me 6 cents. Finally, I was asked by a member of the commission, Mr. W. W. Montgomery, whether I would be content if they would pay me my claim, as presented. I consented, because I would have been obliged to complain to Congress, at Washington ; and the affair might have dragged on for years.

The time had now arrived when I could quit my battalion. I got permission to do so, and received the following certificate from my commanding officer.

*Battalion of Uniform Companies of the N. O. Militia, }*  
COMPANY OF GRENADIERS. *}*

The undersigned Captain, commanding the above named Grenadiers, certifies that Mr. Vincent Nolte, grenadier of the said company, made as such the campaign against the English ; that he performed all the duties of his service without omission from Dec. 16, 1814, until this day : that he took part in the affairs of 23d and 28th Dec., 1814, of the 1st and 8th January, 1815, and that he conducted himself as a brave and loyal soldier, and to the contentment of his superiors and his comrades. This I have signed with my own hand to be used as he shall find it necessary.

NEW ORLEANS, *April 4th*, 1815.

[Signed,]

PETER ROCHE.

The undersigned, commander of the Uniformed Battalion of New Orleans Militia, certifies to the authenticity of the signature of Captain Roche, while he adds that the excellence with which the said Vincent Nolte performed his duty is personally known by him.

NEW ORLEANS, *April 4th*, 1815.

[Signed,]

J. B. PLANCHE, *Major*.

Approved, ANDREW JACKSON,

*Major General and Commander-in Chief.*

I may be allowed a few further remarks on Jackson's character, that man so much more fortunate than naturally distinguished, because I had so many opportunities of observing him nearly, so that in my early observations I easily found the key to many actions of his public life, especially while he was President. That great student of men, Chamfort, who ordinarily far surpasses the philosophic de la Rochefoucault in his remarks, says, "In great matters men show themselves, as they wish to be seen, in small matters, as they are." Correct as is the maxim in general, Jackson's manner of dealing is an exception to the rule, and only in one instance can it be applied to him. It is true, that I refer to what was in his eyes a great matter, his elevation to the Presidency. On this occasion it was his object to play the part of a quiet, peaceful, unpretending man; a part which required the greatest self-control, and power of will. While the necessity lasted he ruled himself with remarkable power; but so soon as it was over, his character of unbridled despotism resumed its freedom, and never bowed again. In this work will be seen many an instance of his self-restraint and self-control: it was not a courageous will, but fierce despotic power which he exhibited when the foe had retreated from New Orleans; which, after the news of the treaty of Ghent had arrived, still made him refuse all constitutional rights to the citizens without necessity, without benefit to the city; imprisoning some, exiling others, putting the whole city under strict and causeless martial-law. He saw the citizens only through the colored glasses of his partisans, who, like Livingston, could not let slip this opportunity of taking vengeance on their enemies—and therefore, in this he may be excused. But his barbarous course in the destructive Seminole war, towards those independent Indians, who were not rebels, and towards the two Englishmen, Arbuthnot and Armbrister, of Nassau, Bahama Islands—because they carried on, without unfriendly feelings towards Americans, a harmless trade with the Indians, in all sorts of goods, among which were powder, lead, fowling-pieces, and rifles—proved how much he thought himself above the law on all occasions. In time of peace with England, he had these two men tried, with orders to hang them. The commission appointed, asserted their incom-



petency, and refused. Jackson then named another commission, and as commanding general, *ordered* them to do their duty and hang those seditious men. They obeyed, but recommended both to the mercy of the general, who must have been convinced of their innocence,—they were dealers in old clothes, or slop-shop keepers. Above all, it was desired to refer the matter to the President of the United States, as this was a duty belonging to higher authority than theirs, and as such reference was usual. But Jackson would not hear of it; they must die instantly, and without further loss of time, one was hanged, and the other shot.

The destruction of the National Bank,—not the Pennsylvanian United States' Bank, but the first that was so-called,—and the withdrawal of the government deposits from it, belonged to the most absolute, and fury-dictated of Jackson's measures, and opened the way for the ruin of the whole bank and finance system in the United States. There have been people who have found plausible excuses, both by word and pen, for this bit of despotism. The pretence was to destroy the power of money in elections, and put an end to foreign influence, which depended upon such power. But the true cause, the original source of the persecution against the Bank of the United States, was the personal hatred of Jackson for its president, Nicholas Biddle, who afterwards won so unfortunate a celebrity, and of whom we will speak on another occasion. All that followed was but the result of Jackson's first and fast resolve to crush the bank and Biddle's influence at any price; and the following simple occurrence gave free course to this obstinate determination, which was so terrible in its consequences. The *Globe*, a Washington paper, stood in the first rank of those who were in the general's interests, who defended his politics, and knew how to put a good face on his blunders. None could so pleasantly flatter Jackson and his cabinet as the editor of this journal. He blew the general's trumpet much as Granier de Cassagnac blows Louis Napoleon's now. Not having made much by this for some years, he determined to remove to New York, and publish his journal there. He soon turned his coat, and began to abuse and blame the general as much as he had

praised him. Thoroughly acquainted with Jackson's views and sentiments, it was the delight of the editor to stir up the general's gall by a light, short article, which presented no points for an answer. Jackson raged in quiet until an opportunity for vengeance upon the turn-coat came. The Bank of the United States, at Philadelphia, was then a government bank, not like Biddle's bank later, the private Bank of Pennsylvania. A quarter of the capital belonged to the government, and one fourth of the directors were appointed by it, the others being elected by the directors. Besides the government directors, a commission was occasionally sent from the treasury department to overlook the accounts. This commission discovered that among the discounted paper, there was a note of the editor of the *Globe* for \$20,000, bearing Biddle's indorsement, and by his influence renewed from time to time. As the aforesaid editor's credit was by no means in a condition to explain this, it was evident that the whole favor was a consequence of Biddle's indorsement. This was a ray of light to Jackson. From that moment he resolved the destruction of the bank, and did all in his power to prevent a renewal of its Act of Incorporation. Twice it received the assent of Congress, and twice did Jackson *Veto* it. To carry the measure, a two-third vote was necessary. But as Jackson's influence was on the increase, this necessary majority could not be obtained. The bank fell, and with it the dam which divided the good from the bad paper in circulation, through the United States. Biddle's views were not then evident, and his motive for not allowing the destruction of the *Globe* man, had an object which was not against the interest of the state, and which should not have called down the unlimited wrath of the general, which produced the common shipwreck of the whole money system, and of the credit of the country.

The spectacle which the city of New Orleans offered when no further doubt remained of the treaty of Ghent, was a remarkable one. At the head of the party then forming, with a view to make Jackson president, stood naturally, Edward Livingston. He had expressed a wish to see the general in the chair, and in fulfilment of the wish, he built his hope of restoration of his own broken

credit and fortune. He was joined by A. L. Duncan, a lawyer, learned and eloquent, but who was the soul and representative of all American popular intrigues. Then followed all those who hoped sooner or later for a good fat office under the Jacksonian administration,—as for instance, District Marshal, Duplessis, who wanted the Collectorship, and P. K. Wagner, editor of the N. O. Gazette, who wished to be Naval Officer. A few Creoles closed the list. The influence which Governor Claiborne once had over these latter, was evidently decreasing; he hated Jackson as he hated every rival, but on this occasion he did not show his ill-will, but was first in all the demonstrations of welcome and honor that greeted the victorious general. The most prominent citizens united to give the general a grand ball in the French Exchange, which would have to remain closed for three days, in order to give opportunity for the necessary preparations. Already were men intriguing for the honor of a place in the ball committee: the treasurer Saul, for instance. Some held that none but natives should be chosen; finally, however, the two first chosen, Major D. Carmick and Commodore Patterson, both great friends of mine, declared that they could not get along without me, and to this circumstance, in connection with the fact that I had seen more great festivities than any other man in New Orleans, was I indebted for my nomination on the ball committee. The upper part of the Exchange was arranged for dancing, and the under part for supper, with flowers, colored lamps, and transparencies with inscriptions. Before supper, Jackson desired to look at the arrangements unaccompanied, and I was appointed to conduct him. One of the transparencies between the arcades bore the inscription, "Jackson and Victory: they are but one." The general looked at it, and turned about to me in a hail-fellow sort of way, saying, "Why did you not write 'Hickory and Victory: they are but one.'" After supper we were treated to a most delicious *pas de deux* by the conqueror and his spouse, an emigrant of the lower classes, whom he had from a Georgian planter, and who explained by her enormous corpulence that French saying, "She shows how far the skin can be stretched." To see these two figures, the general a long, haggard man, with



limbs like a skeleton, and Madame la Generale, a short, fat dumpling, bobbing opposite each other like half-drunken Indians, to the wild melody of *Possum up de Gum Tree*, and endeavoring to make a spring into the air, was very remarkable, and far more edifying a spectacle than any European ballet could possibly have furnished.

Certain ladies of the city, unrecognized by either the American or French population, had determined to present Mrs. Jackson with jewels to the value of \$4,000, which sum was to be made up by private subscriptions.

First, came the wife of Benjamin Morgan, President of the Bank of New Orleans. This lady headed the subscription list with \$500. Some others followed, but scarce \$1,600 had been raised when the jewels were purchased and presented. It was, however, found to be exceedingly difficult to accumulate the other \$2,400, a difficulty, however, which they managed to conceal.

Some of the French settlers in New Orleans had long waited for the moment, to return with what fortune they had gained to France. The breaking out of the war had hindered this.

Among others, a Provençal, by the name of Fournier, who had once served in Egypt under Napoleon, and who had been a porcelain Fayence and glass-ware dealer in New Orleans, had gained large sums. He had sold his warehouses, had sent his capital to France, and was about to follow them when the English appeared. Then he at once entered our company, saying to me, "*Ah, je serai bien aise de leur tirer encore une fois mon coup de fusil—ces mâtins d'Anglais.*" He wore his French cockade, not on, but *in* his bearskin shako.

Two other Frenchmen, the first a dentist, named Robelot, and the second a little pitiful lawyer, called Paillette, who had gained something, not by their practice, but by long years of usury, disappeared during the English invasion, but turned up again immediately on the cessation of hostilities, ready to go to France with the product of their industry

Their capital, as no exchanges were to be had, was invested in cotton, which had cost some twelve cents a pound. During the war there were no ships in port; and although it was to be expected that merchant ships would now come in such numbers as to make freights very low, yet the two men were in such extreme haste, that they freighted two old unseaworthy ships for Havre, at the rate of seven and a half to eight cents on the pound of cotton. The ship *Oliver Ellsworth* carried out 800 bales of cotton, which had cost \$38,000, and the freight amounted to \$26,880, about three times the entire value of the vessel.

In the second year of the war, the 900 tons burthen, new, copper-bottomed, English West India ship, *Lord Nelson*, was taken by the American privateer *Saratoga*, and brought into New Orleans. This vessel, which must have cost from £16,000 to £18,000, was sold at public auction, and was purchased by me, in partnership with a New York firm, for \$18,000, was immediately equipped, and got ready, and sent to Nantes with a cargo of cotton and deer hides. The stern of the ship bore the name of *Lord Nelson*, which we could not allow to remain under the American flag, and so we called her *Horatio*, which was *Lord Nelson's* baptismal name. The vessel's draft was twenty feet; and as there was only eighteen feet at the mouth of the Mississippi, I sent her round to the other side of the Balize, the guard-house at the mouth of the river, had her anchors cast there, and sent the most of her lading out to her.

I must recall to the reader, that during the preparations to receive the invaders, just at the moment of their appearance in our neighborhood, I had received a note from Mr. Shields, requesting a truce until the danger that threatened Louisiana and New Orleans should have passed over. This note, of December 14, was intended as an answer to my letter of November 26, which he had thus kept eighteen days, and in which I had informed him, that his whole conduct towards me had been so contemptible, that I considered him unworthy the notice of a gentleman. It was handed to my friend Nott by J. K. Smith, the marine paymaster, under his guaranty, that so soon as either party should desire to renew the difficulties, the matter should be notified to the other,

and the whole affair brought to an honorable end. On this occasion Mr. Smith remarked, that nothing was more foolish than to mix into the quarrels of others, and to fight about matters that do not concern us.

I was busy with my preparations for a visit to Europe, as I published in the journals, with the notification, that during my absence my partner Hollander would conduct the business. On the 12th of April, the day on which this publication appeared, I received a letter from Mr. Shields, declaring that his patience had come to an end, and that he now officially notified me of his intention to exact corporal satisfaction from me, cane in hand. My reply was that I would publish the whole correspondence, and let the public judge between us: and as he sent my letter back unopened, I put it in the papers. Before this, however, Mr. Shields had everywhere declared that nobody would take such a course but a liar and a cowardly scoundrel. My answer took the same course, and was in these words:—

“As Mr. Thomas Shields has seen fit to mention publicly my name, coupled with epithets which rather describe his own character, I hereby inform all who believe him a man of courage and honor that they are in error; and I request those who hear both sides, before judging, to wait a few days for the publication of the correspondence between us.

VINCENT NOLTE.”

“New Orleans, April 15, 1815.”

A friend, who had read the threatening letter of Mr. Shields, had, on his own responsibility, notified the Justice of the Peace, Fréval, and he had held Shields to bail, in the sum of \$4,000, to keep the peace in general, and towards me in particular.

This correspondence made a great sensation in the city. The unworthy intrigues of Mr. Saul and his companions, to satisfy their own base lust of vengeance, their method of preparing poisoned arrows privately to shoot at me, and their system of employing worthless men, like all my antagonists, or half madmen. like Shields, to work underhandedly, and of setting them on me. like so many mad dogs—all this showed the entire respectable and



honorable population of the city, in the clearest and most convincing manner how small and absurd was the position of this pitiful boaster, who, in the Exchange, and on the street corners, was endeavoring to pass as a judge of manners, and an authority in transactions of this kind. Shields, half cracked before, now went entirely mad, and went about asking everybody how he could answer my publication. It was in vain to tell him that he had already branded me as a liar, that nobody would believe me, that his honor was yet unsullied, etc. He still had sense enough to recognize that for honest men he was branded. The lawyer Grymes, a man thoroughly at home in ingenious financial matters, and always in want of money, said to him, "Now, Shields, if you will give me a thousand dollars, I will answer Nolte's pamphlet in your name." "Done!" was Shields' answer; "it is a bargain." Fourteen days later appeared a little book, of one sheet, which proved only the impossibility of getting a result from the preposterous instructions of an idiot.

My pamphlet had, however, smitten Saul & Co. harder even than Shields. This man found himself so thoroughly unmasked; his rhodomontades, his manner of speech, proverbial among those who knew him, had been so literally sketched; his want of modesty, as well as of sound logic; the unworthiness of his cabals and private schemes were set so naked in the daylight, that he could hardly contain his rage. It was his only thought by day, it was his nightmare. One day I learned that he was teaching the use of the pistol every afternoon to his oldest son, a stupid and yet conceited booby. "No one knows of what use this may be," was his common expression; and the beloved son was taught that he should one day be his father's avenger. One evening I was on the Levée, with a couple of acquaintances, when suddenly I felt some one spit upon my back. I turned round quickly, and said, "What is that?" I saw rapidly retiring the spiritless, corpse-pale face of Saul's eldest son. "You could not prove yourself the true son of your father but by attacking me from behind." I called after him. I was excessively excited, and knew not what to do. The young man was evidently crazy. But how was I to get at the right person, and demand satisfaction from him who

had already refused it. Something must be done ; and I saw no other means than to seek the young man who had so grossly insulted me, the next morning ; and as I knew that he was determined in one way or another to get me out of the way, I determined to sell my life as dearly as possible. The inflexibility of my right arm, because of the elbow having been broken, gave too great an advantage to my opponent in a long distance. I wished, therefore, to fight at five paces, and so to settle one or the other. My two friends, Major McCormick, of the Marines, and Mr. St. Avit, were my seconds, and arranged the distance agreeably to my desires. The challenge was accepted, but the distance was protested against, and ten paces insisted on. Finally, after much debate, seven paces was agreed upon. The first toss for choice of position was won by my adversary's second, Beale. The next was equally against me, and gave him the word, which was to be one, two, three. My two seconds—more particularly my not-to-be-forgotten friend, Major McCormick, one of the noblest men whom I have ever known—were so annoyed at the position in which they saw me, just come from a three years' war, and on the point of going to Europe to see my friends, and to procure for my firm the position for which I had labored for four years and six months—a position that exposed me to a young man of fiery mood between life and death—that they could scarcely attend to the necessary circumstances of a duel. As we took our places, I asked Major McCormick whether the pistol worked well. "I do not know," he answered, tearfully. "Let me hear," said I ; "cock it." He did so, and I heard that all was right, and took the pistol. I have said that my elbow had been broken. This prevented me from holding my arm straight. My adversary's second declared that all the advantage was on my side ; beside, I could not help holding the mouth of the pistol a little elevated, and he insisted that his principal should do the same. Accordingly he placed his arm in that position, the word was given, we fired, and he shot me in the left leg. I lost my shot, and, from loss of blood, fell. I was carried home, and confined to bed for fourteen days. The ball could not be found. Wherever it went, it remains to this day. In the meanwhile the ship *Horatio* had been loaded. Then we

were told that Napoleon had landed at Cannes, but we had no details. The jubilee of the city was incomprehensible. The French consul, Colonel Toussard, who, a year before, had worn a white cockade, at the news of the restoration of the Bourbons, and who had been hooted by the whole mob, therefore concluded to put on the tri-color again. Once more I was in a condition to be transported. I was put into a hammock. My captain procured me a surgeon, who visited me on board the *Horatio*, whither I went by moonlight, about twelve o'clock. The ship was ready; the passengers were the well-known American Consul-General in Paris, Fulwar Skipwith, with his two daughters; Captain Roche, whom I have frequently named; an old French schoolmaster, called Habure, and a Bernese who had married, and was now leaving, a rich planter's widow. The next morning a vessel arrived, after an unusually short passage, and brought us Havre news of March 24. We learned Napoleon's triumphal march through France, the flight of the Bourbons, and his entry into Paris. The papers brought by the vessel gave me the preceding history of Napoleon's acts. I observed that military influence was the cause of this return, and determined to send Captain Bailey back to the city, with the following letter to my partner:—

“ OUTSIDE THE BALIZE, on board the *Horatio*, }  
 “ April 22, 1815. } ”

“ DEAR HOLLANDER :—The journals that Captain Bailey brings you will inform you of what is newest in Paris. Napoleon will have again, God knows how long, the Tuileries, if not France. I doubt that he will stay long. His whole power, as I think, is with the soldiery. One thing is certain, he will find himself in great need of money on his return. We know, by experience, that he is very unscrupulous; and I deem it not only possible, but highly probable, that he will lay hands upon all property coming from abroad, under the pretence that it is British. Therefore I send Captain Bailey to get from you ‘certificates of origin’ for the whole cargo. You know what I mean by certificates of origin; papers to testify that the wares are American products, and the owners American citizens. These certificates must be sent from



our house, and the others interested, to the French consul, who must testify to their genuineness. Send Bailey back quickly, so that we may take advantage of this wind, and get out to sea. I think I can prophesy, that by the time we arrive on the French coast the whole comedy will have been played out ; for my belief grows stronger every day, that Napoleon will not be able to maintain himself. The glory that surrounded him is gone, and cannot be recalled. God be with you. VINCENT NOLTE."

On the fourth day Captain Bailey came back with the certificates, and, wafted by a favorable wind, we sailed from the yellow waters of the Mississippi, out upon the blue bosom of the Gulf of Mexico.

To give a correct idea of manners in New Orleans, is my reason for having given the history of a duel, in itself so uninteresting. I yield it now to oblivion, as one of my saddest and most fruitless experiences, although I cannot avoid mentioning that my first antagonist, paymaster Allen, eighteen months after the duel, became a government defaulter for \$4,000 ; that young Saul, who was underteller in his father's bank, had the same misfortune, only for double the amount ; and that the crack-brained Shields, after finding that his marine cash-box was wanting in heavy sums, which had been expended in costly entertainments, went mad altogether, and ended his life in a lunatic asylum.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### JOURNEY TO FRANCE—WATERLOO—PARIS IN THE HANDS OF THE ALLIES IN 1815.

Voyage to France—Waterloo—Paris in the hands of the Allies in 1815—I am obliged to run into Havana, on my way to Nantes—First news of the battle of Waterloo, at sea—Consternation and rage of my French shipmates—Confirmation of the news by the pilot of the Belle-Isle—Arrival at Paimbœuf—The white flag of the Bourbons floating over the forts—a second corroboration of Napoleon's fall—Visit to my old counting-room at Nantes—The Venus Callypyges still in its former place—Journey to Paris—Prussian outposts at Blois—Major Keller, into whose hands Napoleon's chapeau and sword had fallen at Charleroi—The bridge at Tours, and the Grenadiers of the Old Guard on the left bank—Paris—Description of the position of affairs—Anecdote of the Duke of Wellington—The death of Marshal Ney—Review of the Russian Guard, on the Boulevards, from the Barrier du Trône to the Barrier de l'Etoile—The returned English officers from Orleans at Paris—English and French cooking—The American General Scott at Paris—Object of my trip to Europe—Ouvrard again Napoleon's Commissary-General during the Hundred Days—His description of the battle of Waterloo—Second return of the Bourbons—State of financial affairs—The remodelling of the Hope establishment at Amsterdam in 1814, and the entry of Mr. Jerome Sillem into it—Financial embarrassments of the Bourbons—Ouvrard's success in the negotiation of the first loan through the Barings in London, and the Hopes in Amsterdam—Powerful aid of the Duke of Wellington—Ouvrard, the creator of this mine of wealth for all concerned, comes off empty-handed himself.

THE favorable wind, which had wafted us out of the Mississippi into the Gulf of Mexico, still held good, and yet we were, for several hours, surrounded by the muddy water, which, rolling down with much force, sharply cuts the blue crystal waters of the gulf, making a line of division that is distinctly perceptible for some thirty miles from the river's mouth. This phenomenon may likewise be observed at the mouth of the Rio de Janeiro, and, in even

broad and farther-reaching extent, at the embouchure of the Plata river. The depth of the Mississippi at this line of separation was measured in 1845, and found to be 7,800 feet.

Soon after our departure, the unusual heaving and pitching of our ship, which, having a cargo of 2,000 bales of cotton, had not sufficient ballast, Captain Bailey wisely determined to run into Havana to procure more. A return to the mouth of the Mississippi would have occasioned incalculable loss of time, great expense, and possibly the breaking off of a bargain. On the fourth day of our voyage we reached the magnificent fortress El Moro, which commands the entrance of the harbor of Havana, and from which I had parted five years before. Our inquiry for ballast was soon satisfied. The Cuban government had exposed to public sale a quantity of old and useless iron cannon balls; and, by removing one hundred and fifty bales of cotton from the ship's main-hold, and bringing them on deck, we left a larger space open to receive this very convenient ballast, which could be brought on board so easily and quickly. A sufficient quantity of it was purchased, and in a few days the *Horatio* was once more ready for sea. The wind still continued favorable, as we stood out upon the open ocean, and brought us, within twenty-eight days, to the vicinity of the English coasts, not far from the Scilly Islands. At this point we saw a large vessel in the distance, which came towards us with half-filled sails, and was soon recognized by Captain Bailey, who belonged to New York, as the monthly packet from London to that city. The captain readily complied with my request, that he would speak her if possible. The two ships came closer together, and we distinctly heard, through the speaking trumpet of the packet captain, these words: "How do you do, Captain Bailey?" the commander of the London vessel proving to be an acquaintance. By means of backing and filling the sails, and using the speaking trumpets, they managed to carry on the conversation for some minutes; and after mutual replies to some seafaring questions, a passenger, who had taken the speaking trumpet from the captain's hands, suddenly addressed me with, "How do you do, Mr. Nolte?" These words, as I discovered, came from the English Consul, Barclay, who was returning to New York, after the



end of the war, and who had recognized me on the quarter deck. I now got Captain Bailey to ask, "What news from France?" The answer was, "The Duke of Wellington, with the British army, are in Paris." Hereupon followed the question, "Where is Bonaparte?" and the last reply we could catch brought the words, "He has fled, nobody knows whither." At length the two ships separated, each one steering its course. My readers should have seen the countenances of my two French friends! Incredulity, fury and exasperation were visible, by turns, in the expression of their features. I remarked that I had prophesied correctly, that the whole comedy, as I had said when we started, would probably be played out by the time we reached the shores of France. My former captain, Roche, asked me, with a compassionate shrug of the shoulders, "So you believe all that, do you? It is nothing but confounded English news, manufactured at London for fools; never mind, you will see!" And hereupon the two Frenchmen fell to demonstrating, for each other's satisfaction, that this intelligence could not be true.

As I afterwards learned, they went still farther in New Orleans, where they had always been fond of calling the Duke of Wellington *Vilain-ton*, when the news of the battle of June 18th was made known there, without any further particulars. Mr. Thierry, the talented but extremely Bonapartist editor of the French paper, *Courrier de la Louisiane*, undertook to analyze this news, and to prove, by a series of logical conclusions, that it masked a disastrous defeat of the British army, and that Napoleon had undoubtedly achieved a brilliant triumph, which every good Frenchman was consequently bound to celebrate, without loss of time. Preparations were instantly made to comply with this suggestion, and that same evening busts of Napoleon, crowned with wreaths of laurel, were borne about in procession, surrounded by hundreds of torches, and several bands of music were engaged to play and sing national French airs and hymns. Indescribable was the feeling of these enthusiasts when, as I was afterwards told, they heard the real state of the case; yet my two French travelling companions gave me a very fair idea of this feeling when we, on the next day, neared the roads of Belle Isle, and took on board a French pilot

from Loire. He was instantly laid hold of by these gentlemen, and overwhelmed with inquiries, if it were possible that the stupid nonsense from England about Napoleon's downfall could be true. The poor fellow had to make the sad reply, "Ah! it is only too true! his great courage has betrayed him!" "But where is he then?" was the next question. "Nobody can tell; they say that he has fled to Rochefort, with the intention of escaping to America." This was the beginning of a very animated conversation between the pilot and our friends, who had scarcely been in time to order the necessary ship manœuvres, until an oath or two, such as "damn these Frenchmen," from Captain Bailey, released him from their hands. On the banks of the Loire we everywhere saw the white flag of the Bourbons, and at length came to anchor, not far from Painbœuf.

My first visit in Nantes was, of course, to my former employers, who received me all the more cordially, that I placed in their hands, for sale, a large part of the cargo that I had brought with me. It was not without a certain feeling of interest and curiosity that I again visited the counting-room, where I, ten years before, had consumed both time and pen in learning how to write commercial advices. Mr. Labouchère had not yet lost his taste for butterflies, shells, dried fish, and lizards, for a quantity of these were seen in several cases ranged against the wall. But I was particularly delighted with my old favorite, the plaster-paris statue of Venus—*Callipyges-Venus aux belles fesses*—as the French call her, which was still standing in its old place on a desk. It was plainly to be seen that Mr. Labouchère prized this not less highly than I had done, but his taste for art yielded to a certain feeling of delicacy, which induced him to leave the artistic beauties of the statue more to the force of conjecture, than to let them be openly exposed to the gaze of the uninitiated; and hence he was in the habit of turning the rear side, namely, that where Venus spreads out the large cloth towards the front. When, ten years before this, I had been accustomed to enter the office in the morning, I never failed to turn the statue around, so that no one might be deprived of the sight of those beauties to which the statue owed its name. However, if, in the course of the day, this change

happened to be noticed, the old direction was once more carefully given it, and this very thing proved to me, also now as formerly, that love of art and delicacy of feeling had not relinquished a tittle of their mutual rights, nor undergone any diminution. The head of Venus was still looking as it used to do, over her shoulder at a case of butterflies, which hung behind her. At so interesting and important a period of the world's history, I could not linger at Nantes any longer than my business absolutely required. I was burning with eagerness to reach Paris, where the fate of European nations was about to be decided for the second time, and I was therefore soon upon my way to that city. In Blois, where I arrived the same evening about 10 o'clock, I for the first time saw a portion of the Prussian army, intoxicated with victory, whose advanced posts extended to that place. The inn, where I only thought of taking my evening meal, was crowded to overflowing with Prussian officers, who so frequently repeated the word Belle-Alliance that my curiosity to get some coherent and authentic details of that great battle soon rose to the highest pitch. When I questioned some of the officers, their reply invariably was—"Good heavens, do you not know all about it already?" I told them that I lived in America, and had just arrived from there." "Ah! indeed," they said; "well, that's a good reason; we will take you to our major," they added, "he will tell you all about it. It was himself that took Napoleon's chapeau and sword from his carriage at Charleroi, and gave it to General Blücher. He is a clever, pleasant man, is Major Keller, and will receive you well. Come on! he lodges here in the inn." I accompanied them very willingly. The officers led me to their major, and introduced me with the words, "Here, major, is a man who comes from the woods of America, and does not know one syllable about the great battle of Belle Alliance, of which every one else is talking! Be so kind as to tell him how we drove Napoleon out." The major was really very polite. He asked me to be seated, and I at once requested permission to call for a bottle of champagne, in order that we might empty a few glasses to his health and that of the Prussian army. In this way his tongue was loosened, and in one short hour I had learned as much about the battle as he himself knew.



I then took my leave of him, and proceeded on my way to Paris. On the next morning I reached the bridge at Tours, where I saw the entrance of the Prussian grenadiers upon the hither side, but saw the opposite bank held by the remnants of the old French guard, with their bear-skin caps. This was the corps which Marshal Davoust had led to that spot, in consequence of the capitulation of July 3d, 1815, and had encamped along the left bank of the Loire. In Paris, whose governor was the Prussian General Muffling, I alighted, as I had always done before, at the Hôtel de l'Empire, on the corner of the Rue d'Artois and the Rue de Provence, which afterwards became the property of the banker, Lafitte. The Russian Embassy, the so called Hôtel Phellusson, lay to the left of it, and was just at that time occupied by the General Pozzo di Borgo, who, as a member of the general staff of the Duke of Wellington, had been present at the battle of Waterloo, and was there wounded. Paris at that time contained the Emperor Alexander, the Emperor Francis II., of Austria, King Frederick William III., of Prussia, the Duke of Wellington, Prince Blücher, the General Field Marshal Prince Von Schwarzenberg, Platoff, the hetman of the Cossacks, innumerable Russian, German and other princes, and the most distinguished English, Russian, Austrian, and Prussian generals and diplomats. The result of the battle at Waterloo had brought these leading celebrities of all nations to Paris, and had made that capital the great centre of universal interest. It swarmed with troops and uniforms of all kinds to such a degree that one could neither look nor turn, in any direction, without his gaze being arrested at once by them. Among these masses of military men, here and there stalked the officers of the disbanded French army, alone, like ghosts, in long blue mantles, buttoned close up to their chins, and booted and spurred, but with their chapeaus pressed low down over their foreheads, and dark, rigid countenances. Even the ribbon of the Legion of Honor had disappeared from their button-holes; but so soon as a red [English] uniform approached, you would know it at once in the flashing eyes and excited features of these melancholy pedestrians; and when any of these accidental and indeed almost unavoidable jostlings of the elbows, or little collisions of the feet, which happened in the

midst of a moving crowd, occurred, the angry "Je suis Francais, monsieur!" or "Je suis officier Francais!" broke forth with great bitterness; and if the customary "Pardon, monsieur!" was then omitted, a quarrel, more or less serious, was sure to follow. The French police had the difficult office to discharge to keep these remnants of French valor, upon whom victory had so lately heaped her choicest laurels, away from Paris as much as possible, and they succeeded but indifferently. Notwithstanding this extremely irritated state of feeling on the part of the French military, kept down too as it was by force alone, there was no one in all Paris that rode about more fearlessly than the Duke of Wellington: he showed himself everywhere, and usually in a simple blue overcoat, with the red English sash around his waist, and the usual military chapeau on his head, decorated with a white and red plume. He was generally followed by a single orderly-sergeant on horseback. I saw him ride thus one morning into the court-yard of the Hôtel de l'Empire, whither he had come to inquire for the celebrated London banker Angerstein, who had also put up there. There was no lack of anecdotes concerning the notorious sang-froid of this hero of the day, who, at the battle of Waterloo, had several times rode himself into the midst of his squares, when the French cuirassiers charged in upon them. The Russian Count, Pozzo di Borgo, used to relate that the Duke, when he wanted, in the very beginning of the action, to make an attack upon the French line, with a couple of regiments of Nassau cavalry, suddenly found himself abandoned by them, at the very first cannon shot that was fired, and was left alone with his staff, in the middle of the field. He simply turned to the count, and smilingly said, "What do you think of that? Yet it is with such poltroons that I am expected to gain a battle!" My authority for this anecdote is Mr. Alexander Baring, who heard it himself from the lips of Pozzo di Borgo.

The deepest interest was felt by every one in Paris, at that time, in the trial of Marshal Ney, then pending before the Chamber of Peers; and the sympathy for that renowned soldier was universal. I was sitting at the window of the Café Hardy, on the corner of the Rue d'Artois and the Boulevard des Italiens, taking

my breakfast, when a strong detachment of French gendarmes rode past, and an acquaintance of mine, a Swiss, by the name of Saladin, burst in, greatly agitated, and exclaimed: "There are the gendarmes returning! All is over! I saw it!" This conveyed to me the first information that Ney had been shot, as my friend had witnessed the execution less than an hour before. It was nothing new to me, nor would it be to any one who had learned to know and estimate Ney's character, that, as Saladin told me, the greatest tranquillity was visible in his countenance at the final moment; but a comparison, used by my informant, struck me with much force: "He was as calm," said my friend, "as though he had just swallowed a glass of water!" Five balls penetrated the marshal's heart and three buried themselves in his brain; and he fell without a tremor. I arose, agitated, from my breakfast, and was a long time before I could get over my anger, at this barbarous execution, which the returned Bourbon government had deemed necessary. All Paris afterwards learned, that at the moment when the marshal's wife, the Princess de la Moskowa, was kneeling at the feet of Louis XVIII., and piteously imploring him to spare the life of her husband, an adjutant entered the room with the words, "The marshal has ceased to live;" and thus terminated the interview, and the embarrassment of the king, who would not hear of granting any pardon. From the manifold spectacle, certainly never witnessed before, which Paris at this moment offered to the eye, no one assuredly can form a correct idea but him who saw it. Let any one summon up before him, if he can, the most populous city in the European continent, the very centre of its elegance and fashion, in the hands of two distinguished foreign armies, the French and Prussian, intoxicated with success, and surrounded by the numerous hosts of the Russian autocrat and of the German emperor—Austrians and Cossacks, Baschkiers and Englishmen, Prussians and Honveds, in variegated combination; the public promenades and places of public amusement, the restaurants and theatres, filled, to overflowing, with the elite of these sons of Mars, and in among them the ever elegant, but more or less respectable female classes of Paris, from the so-called *Lionnes* to the *Lorettes*—two names,



which, at that time, had not yet become fashionable, although the ladies who bear them have always existed in these gay creatures, crossing and re-crossing the many-colored scene we have described, with all their own peculiar grace and lightness—the Parisian populace and its “gamins” mingling in harmonious brotherhood with the foreign troopers—these “Alexanders at four sous a head,” as Voltaire used to term the common soldiery—let the reader, I say, picture all this to himself, and he will, perhaps, be able to form an idea of the reality. The varied spectacle continued day and night, without intermission—for the brief nights of July sped swiftly away, in the gratification of the curiosity awakened in, and inspired by the stranger guests; then, too, there was not only every species of enjoyment at hand, but also ample means for its indulgence; full purses and the life of Paris are easily reconciled! The four and twenty hours were passed in an uninterrupted dream; and those who were surrounded by this excitement, re-awoke, after brief slumber, to begin another dream, that bore them along with open eyes.

It was curious to observe the selection made by the diplomats and officers who had to dine in the restaurants of the capital. Thus, for instance, the diplomatists and all who belonged to the embassies, the Russian officers of the higher rank preferred the elegant saloons of the restaurateur Beauvilliers, while the celebrated name of Véry, drew to his establishment all the English and Prussian *gourmés*, and you could not travel his long lowersaloon, where, on one side, the English, and on the other, the Prussian officers used to sit, without having to skip over the trailing cavalry sabres that stuck out behind the seats of the company, and crossed each other in a series of figures like the letter X. The uniform usually announced the choice of dishes, before the customer had time to speak, and the garçons were seldom mistaken; when, as they saw a red uniform, denoting its wearer to be English, enter the room they got their mouths ready to say, *Bifsteck aux pommes de terre?* or, as a Prussian came in, at once suggested some kind of a *potage*. The English officers were somewhat dull of comprehension when the waiters made inquiry respecting the portions they were to order, as for example, where

a simple portion of beef and a double supply of green peas was required. The Englishmen would then ask for a "*bœuf pour un, un petit pois pour deux,*" and seldom comprehended that both could be had without ringing in the additional particle *un*.

An opportunity to see assembled, at one point, all that Paris contained of military and diplomatic notabilities and royal personages was presented to me, one day, by a review of the Russian Guards, on the Boulevards, which were occupied, along their whole extent, from the *Barrière du Trône* to the *Barrière de l'Etoile*. I had stationed myself on the *Boulevard des Italiens*, close by a Russian colonel who stood there at the head of his regiment, and had engaged in conversation with him. All at once a number of patrolling sentinels spread themselves along behind the front line, and caused the spectators to recede a few steps. I expressed to the colonel my regret at this arrangement, as it would, most probably, deprive me of the chance of seeing the three monarchs of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, who were expected at every moment, to ride past accompanied by their respective staffs. The colonel who was a very good natured man, had a small hump on his back, such as I had not seen before on any military person, politely said:—"Very well, Monsieur, remain where you are, at my side, and no one will meddle with you!" I did so, and was not molested. Suddenly, the three monarchs came riding rapidly along the lines; the Emperor Alexander in the middle, his eyes directed at the ladies in the windows and balconies; on his right the Emperor Francis II. of Austria, with his grave face, looking straight before him; and on his left, King Frederic William III., who seemed to be rather examining the caps among the people, than the ladies on the balconies. The staff consisted, as my clever friend, the colonel, reckoned it, of more than a thousand military personages from all countries, and dressed in every variety of uniform. A lucky chance ordained that their Majesties and the whole procession should halt directly in front of the regiment on my right, and I then partly recognized of my own knowledge, and partly had pointed out to me, by my obliging protector, the following dignitaries:—The Russian Grand Dukes Constantine, Nicholas, and Michael, the Austrian Arch-

dukes Charles and John, several Prussian Princes, the Duke of Wellington, the Austrian Field-Marshal, Prince Von Schwarzenberg, Field-Marshal Blucher, General Gneisenau, General Muffling, the Cossack Hetman Platoff, a throng of English, Prussian, and Austrian generals, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Stuart, Prince Metternich and others, whose names and physiognomies have escaped me. As I was returning to my lodgings, after the review, I ran against my former Captain and travelling companion Roche, almost in tears. "Ah, mon Dieu!" he exclaimed; "I never imagined that they were such splendid troops,—these so-called barbarians and Cossacks;—how our bulletins lied about them! And yet what they said, we took for gospel!"

The division of the English Major-General Lambert, which we had fought in New Orleans, had returned to Europe, in time enough to participate in the Battle of Waterloo, and occupation of Paris. Suddenly, one day, I found myself surrounded by several English officers, who greeted me with a cheery "How do you do, Mr. Nolte!" My newly found acquaintances were Major Mitchell, Lieutenant Dobree, and others, who had fallen into our hands, as prisoners, at New Orleans, and who felt very grateful for the friendly treatment they had experienced there, in my house, during the brief period that elapsed after their capture, until the ratification of peace, at Ghent. These gentlemen, in order to give some expression of their kind feeling in return, invited me to a dinner, which they ordered at Very's, with precise instructions to observe in everything, the English style—a by no means agreeable novelty to one of the "*finis cuisiniers de Paris*," who was thus deprived of all freedom of invention. This rage for looking upon English habits and customs as the rule and criterion of the excellent, in everything which prevails on the Continent as well as in England itself, is seldom got rid of by a native of the latter country. If there be any nation which can lay claim to such privilege, it is indeed, the English; but this remark has its limits, and cannot apply to every case. The dinner of my hospitable friends passed off as well as was possible under the circumstances; but of course, they did not find the fish so fresh, nor the roast beef so tender and savory as in England,



and consequently, could not pass it over without their usual "d—n all French cookery!" I felt constrained for the honor of the French *cuisine* to return the dinner, and that, too, in the house of the same restaurateur, Very, whose condemnation they had pronounced. When I was ordering the dinner at Madame Very's, formerly the mistress of Lucien Bonaparte, and dividing my attention between a pair of superb melons that lay upon her marble table, under a slight covering of gauze, and the heaving bosom of the hostess, half-screened with the same delicate tissue, where she sat behind the luscious fruit, I took care to intimate that the repast in question, was intended to show my English friends that there was such a thing as good eating to be had at Paris. That was enough! My guests slighted none of the numerous and varied dishes set before them, drank copiously, and with evident pleasure, and found themselves lighter and gayer after a hearty meal than if they had been devouring two or three pounds of roast-beef, and had emptied bottle after bottle of port wine. They finally confessed, that "a French dinner was a very good thing, after all."

Among the countless numbers that Paris had attracted, at the time of which I am writing, was the American General Scott, the same who was lately a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. He had, during the three years' war with England, distinguished himself in various operations on the Canadian frontiers, such as storming a couple of forts, etc., and was looked upon by his countryman as a military star of the highest order. He was indebted to this circumstance for his mission to Europe, whither the government had sent him to enlarge the sphere of his military knowledge, and thoroughly study the art of war. He came to Paris with the idea, that the greetings of the great military leaders of the Continent, and the testimonials of their admiration, would be everywhere extended to him. In this, however, to his visible chagrin, he had been greatly misled.\* In the vast collection of military celebrities then assembled at Paris, where, in one single circle, could be found the Duke of Wellington, Marshal Prince Blucher, and Schwarzenberg, the Russian Field-Marshal Kutusoff, the Generals Woronzow, Rostopchin, Tchitchagoff, and all these remarkable personages, covered with military decora-

\* See Appendix.

tions, stars, and orders, the long, thin American, in his simple blue coat, without embroidery of any kind, and distinguished only by a modest pair of epaulettes, could not expect to awaken any very great attention. But Scott could not dissemble the contrast between the part he had played in his own country, wherever he showed himself, and his present position, and frequently gave way to vehement, and sometimes even laughable exhibitions of temper. But one thing is certain, viz., that he felt and understood what he was worth; for in later days he displayed his not inconsiderable military and strategic capacity, on another theatre than the Canadian frontiers, that is to say, during the war with Mexico, in 1846 and 1847, when he attracted and fixed general attention.

I have already spoken of my return to Europe. It originated, chiefly, in the wish I felt to renew some former business relations which had been broken off since 1812, by the unexpected war with England, and to open a trade upon a secure basis with some of the European places whose commerce was the most important for New Orleans. In the French ports, people had not yet become sufficiently restored to consciousness; after so long a suppression of everything like the spirit of enterprise, they were still groping about in the dark. None but the shippers had begun to move. After a short visit, paid to my London friends, the Barings—upon which occasion a few lines from Mr. Alexander Baring, then at Geneva, informed me that I should most probably meet him in Paris—I returned to the latter city, and determined, in the meanwhile, to visit the south of France, particularly Marseilles, afterwards repairing to Bayonne and Bordeaux, and thence returning to Paris—From Marseilles I dispatched, to New Orleans, the first cargo of export articles that had left that port since the peace. I took my return trip through Nismes, Montpellier, Narbonne, and the Pyrenees, visited my friend A. P. Lestapis and his family at Pau, went thence to Bayonne and Bordeaux, and finally, in the month of March, met my patron and friend, Mr. Alexander Baring, at Paris. The consequences that followed the renewed interviews we had together were, that the blank credit for £10,000 opened in favor of my house, was confirmed, and, in

addition thereto, full power conceded to interest the London firm to double that amount in any safe local business.

It was just at this time, when the exhaustion of the French treasury, and the daily increasing necessities of the government, coupled with its utter inability to procure credit, was occasioning it the greatest embarrassments, to such an extent, indeed, that, to use a very common expression, "it could not help itself,"—that Ouvrard had an opportunity of again raising his head, and finding an appropriate field for the full exercise of his undeniably commanding financial talent. He had already carried on a correspondence, respecting the financial position of France, with the two heads of the Hope and Baring firms, with whom he was on terms of friendship. During the brief interregnum of the Bourbons, between the months of April, 1814, and March, 1815, when Napoleon threw France and all Europe into astonishment by his sudden return from Elba, he had used all the influence he still retained with Messrs. Hope & Co. to procure for Auguste Doumerc, the new Commissary-General, the funds he needed to carry on his business and fulfil his obligations; but the Emperor's return brought about, as may readily have been foreseen, a complication in the business, which was conducted under the name of Doumerc, but in reality appertained to Ouvrard. Under these circumstances he could not extricate himself, either from the liquidation of his former liabilities, nor from those arising out of the business he had just been carrying on under another person's name: hence he was obliged to remain in Paris, subject to the imperious and arbitrary will of his old enemy, Napoleon. In the meanwhile the latter had found time for reflection at Elba; and if he had not become convinced of the injustice he had done to a man whom he had treated so inconsiderately and unmercifully, he had at least recognized the value of that man's financial capacity. Twenty-four hours in the Tuilleries had scarcely rolled by when Napoleon, although he found fifty millions of francs in the treasury, deemed it expedient to summon Ouvrard to an interview. The pretext put forward to account for this step was a proposition from the Emperor to send Ouvrard as his plenipotentiary to the Congress at Vienna, there to bring about a favorable change of opinion, in



the minds of Talleyrand and Metternich, respecting the resolutions that were to be adopted by the Congress in relation to himself. Ouvrard declined this mission, and the real object of the interview was then brought upon the tapis, viz., the desperate want of funds felt at that moment. "Can you give me any money?" was Napoleon's question. "How much does your imperial majesty require?" was the answer. "To begin with," said the emperor, "fifty millions of francs." "I could get that amount within twenty days, in return for five millions of Rente (of which the price was then fifty-three francs), to be given me at fifty francs, and under the condition that the treasury shall pay Doumere, whose creditor I am, the fifteen millions it owes him." The agreement was at once concluded, and the terms drawn up on the spot, by a secretary of the emperor, the latter dictating every word, and signing the paper with his own hand; for Ouvrard was unwilling to let it pass through the hands of the ministers, who had, on other occasions, signed so many of the emperor's decrees to his loss and overthrow. Napoleon—who had made himself fully acquainted with the condition of the public credit on the Paris Bourse—himself doubted the success of this proposition; but when Ouvrard continued, for seventeen days, to pay in two millions of francs daily to the treasury, he could scarcely master his astonishment. This was perhaps the first time that he, who had never known any other way of filling the treasury, than by contributions from the countries he overran, and the taxation of his own subjects, formed a correct idea of the power of credit, and learned, by experience, that a state debt, even in a precarious condition of public credit, is still the very source from which to supply the deficiencies of public income.

Ouvrard was obliged to accept, under certain conditions, Napoleon's proposal to make him, once again, Commissary-General of the army. He followed the emperor when he set out with his army to the Belgian frontier; and, at Waterloo, was among his staff, and in his immediate neighborhood. Some time afterwards, when I had an opportunity of talking to him about the battle, he remarked: "I was there as a spectator of the finest drama I ever witnessed. The connection and succession of scenes moved on-

ward of themselves; the interest was fixed at the beginning, and sustained throughout to the very end—a deplorable one, if you will,” he added, “for no one could see it more clearly.” Ouvrard was then, and always remained, what the French call “un aimable causeur”—a pleasant talker, and the gift of riveting the attention of his hearers remained with him to his latest years. I met with him again in 1835; and, when I last saw him in Paris, eleven years afterwards, he had reached the good old age of seventy-six. His appointment to the post of *Munitionnaire-Général* of the French army, during the Hundred Days, he owed to the conviction Napoleon had acquired at Elba, that in him he would select the best, the proper, the only man who could make the equipment and victualling of an army embracing one hundred thousand men, possible, without immediate funds, and in this appointment, unwillingly made, as it was, beyond a doubt, for the force of circumstances alone had brought it about, lay the strongest acknowledgment of his merit, and the only satisfaction at that time possible for the injustice and ill treatment to which he had been subjected. But Ouvrard had still another recognition of his claim to deference and respect, when Napoleon, in the midst of his preparations for departure to another hemisphere, offered him 1,400,000 francs of Rente for bills on the United States, to the amount of fourteen millions, the Rente to be taken at fifty francs. But, Ouvrard foresaw that, after Napoleon’s flight, the Rente would be disputed, and consequently declined the proposition.

The restored government of Louis XVIII. had to contend with unusual difficulties, in raising the funds that were absolutely necessary for not only the royal coffers, but for the payment of subsidies and the support of the foreign armies. The extremely impolitic measure of a forced loan, to the amount of one hundred millions, resorted to, could have no other consequences than to close the door upon all return of confidence. Ouvrard, who, as I have elsewhere stated, had busied himself as early as the year 1814, with all kinds of projects, in order to meet the wants of the government by foreign loans, now came forward with fresh propositions, and found means for executing the plan he conceived

of first acquiring the confidence of the Baring house, and then, as a natural consequence, that of Messrs. Hope & Co., in Amsterdam. The latter had, in a measure, become a branch of the Baring concern. The downfall of Napoleon's empire in 1814, had presented to this celebrated house, which, for five years past, had been subsisting only for the liquidation of the various state loans undertaken by it, an opportunity of at once resuming all its former importance; but the partners, who were then living in England, manifested but little disposition to do so: Mr. A. Baring, who fully comprehended the magic influence of so illustrious a mercantile name, and had learned from past experience to appreciate the scope and extent of its activity and effectiveness, resolved to buy it out, under the condition that the old, original firm should be maintained. He overcame the reluctance of his brother-in-law, Mr. P. C. Labouchère, who had been intrusted with the business management of the concern, to undertake it again, and the latter finally consented, expressly stipulating that he should be allowed to select an assistant: the desired aid was found in his friend, Mr. Jerome Sillem, who had formerly lived in Hamburgh, and just at the period in question, was on his return from St. Petersburg, where, during Napoleon's Russian Campaign, he had found an opportunity to reëstablish his fortune which the times had greatly impaired. Mr. Baring reserved for himself a third part in the new house of Hope & Co., and the other two thirds were divided between the brothers P. C. and S. P. Labouchère, Mr. Jerome Sillem, Mr. Van der Hoop of the former house of Krusen, at Amsterdam, and Mr. P. F. Lestapis, a younger brother of the Mr. A. P. Lestapis, whom I have so frequently mentioned; this young man had been reared to mercantile pursuits by Mr. Labouchère in Holland. Mr. Thomas Baring, one of the present heads of the Baring house at London, also took part in the management of the Hope concern, as did John, the younger son of Mr. P. C. Labouchère. Ouvrard, who was, unweariedly, following out his plan, had, as I have already stated, been carrying on a lively correspondence with Mr. Alexander Baring to the effect that the French government would certainly, sooner or later, be driven to the necessity of making



heavy loans, in order to meet the enormous burthens laid upon it daily for the maintenance of the foreign garrison, and annually, by the contributions it was compelled to pay to the allies, for the space of five years. The main point on which the success of Ouvrard's project depended, was the confidence of the English capitalists and no one possessed a surer key to this than the house of the Barings. Its proverbial honor and foresight alone could have given due weight and influence to the example it set of confidence in the financial position of France, and open the way to the London money market. Mr. Alexander Baring, who perfectly understood this, determined to travel through France, in all directions, particularly the southern part of that country, in order to learn by personal observation the feeling of the people, their tax-bearing capacity, the regularity with which the taxes were paid in. It was just after his return from this tour, that we met again at Paris.

I might here take the liberty of conducting my readers back to the thread of my own wanderings and adventures, did I not preserve a lively recollection of the promise made to them in my preface that I would lay before them some hitherto unrecorded traits and anecdotes from the lives of some of the remarkable characters of my time, with whom, I had an opportunity of personal acquaintanceship, and likewise to analyze for them some of those curious events which I had a better chance and means of observing than most of my contemporaries. A peep behind the curtain was not, at that time, granted to every one, and I have survived the majority of those to whom it was conceded. For this very reason I consider it a duty to leave no omissions in my narrative.

The financial embarrassment of France, at that time, may very probably have arisen from the fact that the stipulated yearly contributions demanded a sum of 140 millions of francs, and the yearly expense of maintaining the foreign army of occupation reached 160 millions. For such an extraordinary burthen as this, which France had heaped upon her shoulders, all means were lacking. An interruption, if not stoppage of payment, was unavoidable, and as will be afterwards seen, it did not fail to

come. The man who possessed the unconditional confidence of all crowned heads was the Duke of Wellington, and the first deficiency of the required funds awakened his dissatisfaction; or, rather, his very deepest anxiety. All applications for loans, which it was deemed necessary to make in a measure corresponding with the extent of actual necessities, were fruitless. Curvetto, the minister of Finance, reaped the bitter experience that he could get nothing from the Paris Bourse, that is to say, from the financiers of that city, for no one offered or was willing to take the new emission of State paper. After Ouvrard had secured the consent and co-operation of Messrs. Baring and Labouchère, he succeeded in persuading the Duke of Wellington that all difficulty in procuring means to support the foreign troops must cease, whenever the Allied Powers would come to an understanding to accept French State paper in payment for the expenditure occasioned them, and then sell the same paper through their own confidential agents,—a position for which he proposed his friends Messrs. Baring & Hope. That these houses possessed the means of making advances, on account of this State paper, until the favorable moment should arrive for selling it again, could not be doubted, and that their appearing in the matter would awaken and gradually bring back the confidence of capitalists, both in and out of England, could be predicted with considerable certainty, and that the maintenance of the prices of the State property, the power to sell and the choice of the moment when to do so should be intrusted to one hand alone, was perfectly clear. The combined strength of these three foundation pillars of the whole measure did not escape the Duke of Wellington, who, up to that time, had doubted the possibility of selling such a mass of French State paper, under the guaranty of an English house. After twenty-four hours delay for reflection, one point was gained; the Duke, fully convinced that the whole project was feasible, assured Ouvrard that he had no doubt whatever the other Powers would follow his example. The Duke had conjectured rightly. After a brief trip to London, he lodged in military fashion, on his return, at Ouvrard's own house, in the

Champs Elysées, and the latter in compliance with his request, on January 8th, 1817, gave him a note developing and unfolding the whole plan. It was received on the same day by the ambassadors of all the Powers, and communicated to the latter by express couriers. Messrs. Baring & Labouchère had, in one of their last communications, declared that they were afraid of obstructing the course of the affair by their interference, and would therefore, keep aloof from it until they should be summoned by all the interested parties,—the French Ministry and the Allied Powers,—to repair to Paris. Ouvrard had, in his letters, affirmed that the Duc de Richelieu and Corvetto, the Minister of Finance had, after accepting his propositions, jointly requested him to invite Messrs. Baring & Labouchère to Paris. The result, however, proved the incorrectness of this declaration, as would in fact, appear from the very face of it, since Ouvrard was in no need of any request of the kind, being too much interested in the affair to have delayed such an invitation. It is certain that he sent his open letter, to this effect, under cover to the French Ambassador in London, the Marquis d'Osmond, and that the latter thus found himself compelled to take up his pen and confirm the invitation of the Duc de Richelieu to the two gentlemen. As they could not now have any further doubt, they informed Ouvrard on January 14th, 1817, that they would be in Paris within a week. When they did arrive, they at once waited upon the Duc de Richelieu, without letting Ouvrard know. The Duc was taken by surprise, and did not hesitate to declare that nothing had yet been definitively settled upon, and that he had, in no manner whatever, authorized Ouvrard to give the invitation in *his* name. Ouvrard was now summoned, and they began to reproach him. He confessed that the Duc was right; "But," he added, "as I knew that there was no other way of getting you to come here, I resorted to this method; however, now that you are once here, in Paris, I will pledge myself, that you succeed!" I am indebted to Mr. Labouchère himself for this anecdote; that gentleman used to tell it over with evident pleasure, whenever the occasion to do so offered. Moreover, Ouvrard kept his word. A few



days afterwards, when Messrs. Baring and Labouchère expressed the wish to purchase the French Rentes themselves, rather than to act as salesmen for the Allies, a contract was made directly with them for six millions of Rentes, or 120 millions capital, at 53 francs 85 centimes, whereby the government was enabled to handle the sum of 64,620,000 francs towards meeting the expenses of the foreign troops. Soon afterwards, a further contract for 30 millions of Rentes, at 57 francs 51 centimes, or 545,035,000 francs capital, took place between the government and these gentlemen. This made the Rentes rise at once, to 64, then to 68, and at last to 72 francs, and by taking 68 for the average price, the speculators won nearly 8 millions of francs by their operation.

The reader will learn with regret, that Ouvrard, himself, to whom the whole combination was owing, and who had been the real originator of this immense scheme, as well as the agent by whom it was carried into operation, to the relief of the indescribable embarrassments that overwhelmed the French Treasury, by re-awakening the confidence of English financiers, and attracting their capital,—that this man, I say, came empty-handed out of an affair that created such advantages for others. When the first contract was concluded with Messrs. Baring & Hope, a good amount of Rentes was made over to him at the same price of 53 francs, as a quittance for all the deliveries made, or to be made by him to the Allied Army of Occupation, and those gentlemen had in consequence of this, reserved him no place on the list of their subscribers. But the French Minister of War, the Duc de Feltre, availed himself of the arrest of M. Doumerc,—in whose name the whole business of supplies, &c., had been carried on,—as a pretext for refusing to sign this arrangement; the government, he said was defrauded by the sudden rise of the Rentes, and all that Ouvrard could do, or say, to change his resolution, was of no avail. It really seems as though fate had decreed that this extraordinary man should be left dangling to the long chain of his financial entanglements, and yet, he invariably rose to the surface again, as the indispensable person who had to extend a

helping hand to every government from the commencement of the Empire, up to the termination of the Bourbon régime. He was, in his career, a living example of the words which Lessing puts into the mouth of the Countess Orsina, in his *Emilia Galotti*: "Let the Evil One get hold on you, but by a hair, and you are his, forever!"

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BATTLE-FIELD OF WATERLOO.—THE COTTON-MARKET.—FRANCIS BARING.—REMODELLING OF THE BARINGS' ESTABLISHMENT.

Departure from Paris—Brussels—Visit to the Field of Waterloo—Costa, Napoleon's Guide, becomes mine—A short visit to Hamburgh and England, on my way back to the United States—Embarkation at Liverpool—Pitcairn, the former American Consul at Hamburgh, with his newly-married Daughter and Son-in-Law, are my travelling Companions—The first Heart outpouring of the fond wedded pair, upon our arrival at New York—Journey overland to New Orleans—The Scotch Houses in New Orleans—Their policy on the Cotton Market, and mine—Trip to Europe in the Summer of 1819—The Congress at Aix, in 1818—Crisis in the Money Market—Berenbrook, the Dutch Speculator in Funds—Alexander Baring rescues the Paris Money Market from the consequences of the Crisis—Enormous Business of my House in New Orleans—Its preponderance in the Cotton-Market—Arrival of Mr. Francis Baring, then the Junior, now the Senior Partner of the London House at New Orleans—Sketch of some of that gentleman's peculiar Traits of Character—Death of Mr. S. C. Holland—Remodelling of the Baring House—Entry of Mr. Joshua Bates into it.

I now return from this digression to my own history, the thread of which left me at Paris with Mr. Alexander Baring. Busied with my preparations for a speedy return to America, I took my leave of this remarkable man, and departed to pay my friends at Hamburgh, and my parents at Ratzeburg a short visit, before leaving the continent of Europe. My road lay, as usual, through Brussels, which, only a few months previously, had been the very centre around which thundered all the martial tumult, where the political fate of the continent was fought for and decided. Nine months had now elapsed since the battle of Waterloo had



settled this great question. On the very day after my arrival at Brussels, I had a chance to visit the field of battle. A fortunate chance brought me for a cicerone, the same peasant, Costa, whom Napoleon found at Charleroi, on the evening before the battle, and took with him to his head-quarters as a guide. All the different narratives of the battle which I had collected and read, the plans and maps I had carefully studied, and a panoramic view of the field I had procured in London, had stamped themselves so vividly on my memory, that I had scarcely reached the scene, and alighted from my vehicle, ere I found myself quite at home. Not a hillock, not an unevenness of the ground, not a clump of trees, not a hamlet in the neighborhood, or far away, that I had not named at the first glance. Costa, who had to keep the description he had learned by heart, to himself, at length remarked that I did not require his services, if, as he was led to suppose, I had myself been present at the battle. I acquainted him with the truth, and greatly enjoyed his contradictory answers, when I questioned him in regard to certain points of detail. Thus, for instance, I found myself much more at home than he was, in the Castle of Hougoumont and its garden, where the marks of destruction were still so distinctly visible, for he had been beside the emperor all day, until the hero of the age was, for the second time, compelled to seek safety in flight. When Costa—this was his own story—having been placed among Napoleon's staff, rode with him into the first fire of the English batteries, he laid himself with his whole body lengthwise and as close to the animal as he could cling, upon his horse's back, so that the enemy's balls might not hit him. When Napoleon saw this, he called to him with a smile. "Get up, you silly fellow! you cannot avoid the ball that is destined to strike you, no matter how you try to do so!" "And he was right!" added Costa, "for here I am, you see." From the causeway of La Haye Sainte, we rode along a hollow, sheltered on either side by hills. I here asked my guide, if this were not the spot from which Napoleon observed the last onset of his guards and cuirassiers, under Ney. "You are on the very ground!" he said, "it was precisely here!" I then asked, "What did he say? what did he do?" "Not

much!" rejoined Costa, "he looked once more through his field-glass, then he said: 'They are in confusion—all is over—let us go!' "We then took the track right across the field to Charleroi, dashing along as fast as our beasts could go, and when we reached the place, an aide-de-camp flung me a double Napoleon, with the words: 'To the d—l with you!' or something worse."

In Hamburgh I found all my early friends, with few exceptions, and at Ratzeburg my parents met me in good health, contented and happy. After opening the way to some business connections, I again set out for England, where some consultations in regard to a definite understanding respecting the foundation of future business combinations, rendered a brief delay necessary, for the time had at length arrived, when I could step forward as an independent merchant, in the true sense of the word, and take my place on the stage of the commercial world, whose central point was, at that time, more than ever before, in the English money-market. In consequence of the war between the United States and England, more than four years of my life were sacrificed, exactly at the time when my activity should have developed itself, and the gradual return to that extended commerce from which the European continent was shut out for so many years, and of which the mercantile classes had already availed themselves for about eleven months, namely, from April 1814 up to March 1815, remained, during that time, a sealed book to the American merchant. Hence, there was created a gap in the experience of the latter, which could not be filled by ordinary minds, and much striking in the dark was, consequently, unavoidable. The first idea of a regular line of packets, to run between New York and Liverpool, once every month—a passage now made by vessels sailing every five days—had not yet been put in execution, and I was compelled to embark on a merchant craft, the *Minerva Smith*, for New York. The voyage lasted for the unusually long period of fifty-seven days. Among the passengers was the former American Consul at Hamburgh, a Mr. Pitcairn, who was accompanying his newly-married daughter\* and her husband to America.

\* The mother of this young lady was the celebrated Pamela, the second foster-daughter of Madame de Genlis, who had married the Irish rebel, Lord

A double application of the words "newly-married," may be allowed me here, since the young couple had been joined in wedlock, on Saturday, at Edinburg, and, immediately after the repast usual there on such occasions—every one knows what a Scotch breakfast is—had started with post-horses for Glasgow, and having there learned that the ship on which they intended to embark, would sail on Monday, continued their journey to Liverpool without stopping even over night, and had gone immediately on board on Monday afternoon. About two o'clock, we put out to sea. The young couple at once attacked with sea-sickness, retired to their stateroom, and the overflow of their affection was lost in the nausea of the sea, for during the whole long voyage they did not show themselves again. It was only when we had arrived off the coast of New Jersey, and took on board a pilot, and were leaving the Sandy Hook lighthouse, at the entrance of New York harbor, behind us, that they once more appeared on deck. The young bride, intoxicated with delight, sat down near the cabin stairs, her husband followed her, and when he got near enough she flung her arms about his neck and exclaimed, with an expression of deep longing: "Ah, dear S——, (I omit the name purposely), how happy it would make me now, if I only had a slice of fine Ham-burgh bread, with fresh May butter, and a morsel of Brunswick sausage!" That the joys of the honeymoon, passed at sea, could concentrate themselves in such a wish, occasioned me some little surprise, which my readers may share, when I assure them that in this instance, as in all others, my narrative is but the mirror of historical truth, and not the channel of fiction. When Göethe wrote the words: "A spectacle for gods, to see two loving ones!" he, most assuredly, did not embrace either the beginning or the end of the sea-voyage these two "loving ones" made, in his keen poetic view.

I did not remain long in New York and Philadelphia upon this occasion. I determined to travel through Virginia in every direction, so as to form a correct idea of the extent of the tobacco crops there, and traversed the so-called *Kentucky wilderness* to

Edward Fitzgerald, and, after his death in prison, at Dublin, had fled to Ham-burgh, where she became acquainted with Piteairn.



Nashville, in the state of Tennessee, from that place to Huntsville, and thence back again to Nashville and Kentucky, embarking, at Louisville, on board of a newly-constructed steamboat for New Orleans, where I once more found my partner, enjoying good health, after an absence, on my part, of nearly two years. During this interval several Scotch houses had been established in that city, having opened there with large assortments of manufactured goods, whose proceeds they had expended in the purchase of cotton. This trade continued. One of the most respectable of those who had previously lived in the city, himself of Scottish origin, but born at New Orleans, and formerly a ship-captain, Thomas Urquhart by name, who had visited the land of his parents, and long resided at Glasgow, gradually opened the way for these establishments to extensive credit, by his exaggerated account of their boundless means, and in this way they found themselves enabled to employ their bills on England, and proceed with their purchases of cotton. These representatives of the Scotch houses transacted business on a systematic plan, arising more out of an instinctive feeling of their common interest than from any regular arrangement entered into between them, and endeavored to bring down the price of cotton, and keep purchasers aloof, by circulating unfavorable news concerning the posture of the factories at Manchester and Glasgow, and the lack of demand for spun yarn. When orders, at fixed or unlimited prices, fell into the hands of the few commission houses then established at New Orleans, they had to be filled at all events, and these manœuvres were of little avail; but in every other case, where a suddenly awakened spirit of enterprise raised its head, or where returns were to be made to Europe for goods, they managed to work upon the market, and in many instances to frighten off intended buyers. Excepting these branches of Scotch houses, no one in New Orleans was acquainted with the English cotton market as it really was, and the Havre market, which subsequently became so important, was then in its cradle. But the credit which these branches procured abroad, at New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, and other ports of the United States, was not always well deserved. Their capital was usually borrowed, on three or four signatures, from the

banks, through the influence of the central capitalists in Glasgow. The nine and twelve months notes given in return were, every time they fell due, renewed, for a moderate payment of interest, and thus, by means of fictitious capital, a competition was kept up for years in the foreign markets, whose origin was owing, not to any natural relation between production and consumption, but to mere speculation alone. The young men, who were sent out from Scotland to carry on this business, were, generally, men without means, but intelligent, to whom a share of the profits was allowed, as a reward for their exertions, under the condition that they should bear the pro rata of interest accruing on their quota of the money made. This figured as the *first* article on the debit side of their account current books, while on the credit side they were at liberty to note the profit not yet realized. In case the business lost, in the course of the year, instead of gaining, the debtor liability of the original interests embarked was increased by the respective shares of the computed loss, and the agents, thus having to look to the principal of the house, were obliged to remain satisfied with the honor of seeing their names in the firm, and yet usually remained indebted to the central house. I have, in the course of my life, known several meritorious young men, from Scotland, who were destined to remain for long years the victims of this cheap and convenient method of securing effective and faithful agent-clerks.

My partner Hollander had no experience in these things, usually paid very little attention to what was passing around him, and was prone to the error of taking every man to be honest until he had proof to the contrary—a very costly system to go upon in a region such as Louisiana was at that time. This sort of proof, too, is seldom obtained without having first been paid for, that is to say, by one's own experience. Hence, in America, as well as in Paris, the best and least expensive rule is to prefer proven honesty to a mere reputation for the possession of that virtue. My companion, a most honorable man, who never allowed an unworthy thought to arise in his own mind, could not presume the existence of base motives in others, whom he looked upon as friends; and hence it was, that in the discretionary orders for cot-

ton my house received, he made his own judgment subordinate to the expressed opinions of the Scotch agents who surrounded him, and whose society he liked. I had left England but a few months previously, and having foreseen an inevitable rise in the price of cotton, wrote from New York, as I soon afterwards repeated from Louisiana, that it would be advisable to lay out some money for cotton on our account, in anticipation of this rise. My letter contained the sentence, "Perhaps later advices than this letter contains may have arrived direct from Liverpool, and they must not be neglected by any means." The contingency thus hinted had really occurred; the later advices—later by a few days—had represented the Liverpool market as flat, but prices had not receded. Hollander conferred with his Scotch friends, and they, probably instructed by their leading houses in Scotland, repeated the usual song, and declared that cotton yarn was without demand, and that he ought not to think of buying. This was enough for Hollander, and he folded his arms. When I arrived my first inquiry was, "Have we been buying?" "No!" was the reply; "cotton is down in the English manufacturing towns, and the English houses here are not moving." It was only when I remarked that a local rise of price was unavoidable, if we waited to hear better news from Liverpool before touching the article, that my associate perceived how he had sacrificed his own judgment. The first squad of cotton brokers called upon me on the morning after my arrival. Already acquainted with the nominal prices, I asked what was in the market. "We can offer you," said the brokers Dubuys & Longer, "two boat-loads of the best planters' marks, from the Opelousas district, at sixteen cents, each load consisting of about 400 bales." I examined the samples they had brought, the quality was good, and said that I would take both loads. At that time such a purchase was sufficient to excite remark, and the so-called English, but, properly speaking, Scotch houses, were full of curiosity to know the man who could venture, against their notions, to make so heavy a stride into the market. Two days afterwards these gentlemen began, quietly, to make certain bargains of their own, notwithstanding the discouraging news they had received from "our folks," as they called the leading houses at home, and reg



ularly continued their purchases from time to time. The ice was broken, and my Scottish neighbors were speedily convinced that every attempt to make me dance to their music would signally fail. My position in the cotton market now became, step by step, more influential; whether I would buy, and when, or how, was, for many years afterwards, a matter of calculation which my competitors could not leave out of sight, and which often led them into false conclusions.

In the year 1818, my house was the first that sent out printed advices in relation to the eventualities of the cotton market and the crops. The meteorological weather tables had given me the idea of getting up one similar to them, which should exhibit the course and fluctuations of prices, from week to week, during the shipping period of three successive years, and designate the difference of exchange, each time, by black, red, and blue lines. These new tables were very successful, particularly among the French speculators in cotton, and led to many commissions from Havre, Rouen, and Switzerland.

In the summer of 1819, I again visited Europe. It was for both the commercial and political relations of that continent, an epoch of the greatest interest, when business had just begun to recover from the consequences of the crisis that had arisen during the preceding year. France, at least, had, through the loan of 27,238,938 francs, 5 per cent. rente decided upon by the congress of crowned heads at Aix, and taken by the Barings at 67 francs, freed herself from the burthen of the sanitary cordon, which the leaders of the holy alliance, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, had intended to maintain, for five years, along the northern and north-eastern frontiers of France, with an army of 50,000 men, each. But the Paris Bourse received some severe blows, by the fall of the State paper from 67 to 58, and was indebted for its rescue only to the coolness of Mr. Alexander Baring, as I have elsewhere related.\*

Besides the fall of 30 per cent. in the price of goods, and the sudden reduction that succeeded it of four millions of pounds ster-

\* In No. 24, of the "Deutschen Freihafen," for 1848. See my article on "Lord Ashburton and the Baring house at London."

ling, in the English paper circulation, on the part of the London Bank, it was the mad enterprises of sundry speculators in the funds in London, and particularly at Paris, that opened the way to the crisis of that time. For an example, I need refer only to the Hollander Berenbrock, from Amsterdam, who possessed a capital of perhaps half a million of francs, and had purchased five millions 5 per cent. rentes, or one hundred millions of capital on credit, then, as a millionaire, had procured an advance of one hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand francs each, from seven or eight bankers, and in this way paid up his interest for several months in succession, calculating that a rise in the rentes of 1 per cent. would make him a million better; of 2 per cent. two millions, and so on;—but the funds *fell* more than 8 per cent., and Berenbrock remained nearly eight millions in debt to the Paris bankers and “agents de change.” The Bourse was full of similar speculators, even if all of them did not give their enterprises the same extension; and it may readily be imagined what an effect large sales of rentes, following each other in rapid succession, must necessarily exercise upon its currency on change. The loan taken by Messrs. Baring & Co. was concluded in two portions—one of 14,925,500 francs, at 66 francs 50 centimes, and the other of 12,313,438 francs, at 67. The rente fell to 58 francs before the contracting parties had the last portion in their hands. The whole Paris Bourse was violently agitated—the contractors saw that, under such circumstances, the strength was lacking to sustain so heavy an emission of State paper, and that there would be any number of failures in case a further sum of two hundred and forty-six millions were put in circulation. Thus, pretty nearly every one lost all presence of mind; but Mr. Alexander Baring retained his. He persuaded the Duke de Richelieu to annul the contract for the last half of the loan, and likewise prevailed upon the bankers associated with him to relinquish it, on their part. Yet, it was not merely his powers of persuasion that brought about this result. The majority of the ministers of the allied powers, present at Aix—Metternich, Nesselrode, Hardenberg, and others—had desired to participate in the loan, and there had been an understanding to that effect. When the rente fell, Mr.

Baring desired that they should make their payments themselves, but they lacked the means—they had counted upon the profits and not upon the risks of the venture. A hint was then thrown out that they should be released from their obligations, if they could prevail upon the Duc de Richelieu to accede to the measure I have mentioned. The Congress of Plenipotentiaries bade and Richelieu obeyed.

The sudden reduction by the London Bank of four millions of pounds sterling, in the English paper circulation, had given the first blow to the prices of goods in the commercial market. The rapid and progressive extension of trade, upon the re-opening of its channels after the year 1815, had given rise to a certain disproportion between the general consumption and the requisite supplies: the origin of this disproportion lay chiefly in the want of accurate knowledge respecting the nature and extent of these two elements of commerce. The rapidly returning and daily increasing prosperity of trade had manifested a continually upward tendency for two years and a half—and thus the turning point had been nearly approached, where that inevitable reaction must begin, which human affairs cannot always escape; but people had not yet discovered the method of establishing a balance between consumption and the eventualities of production and supply.

This was the posture of the European market, when, after passing the winter of 1819–20 at Paris, I again embarked in March, of the latter year, at Bordeaux, on board of the French vessel "*La Jeune Corinne*," direct for New Orleans.

The business of my house had very importantly increased. In opposition to the six, seven, or eight thousand bales of cotton, which most of the houses in that city, styling themselves first class, used to purchase, my quota was seldom less than sixteen or eighteen thousand bales, which occasioned the transfer from hand to hand of at least a million and a half of dollars within a few weeks. The season of 1820–21 was a particularly successful one for my house. The most important commissions from France were, through the activity of our agents, concentrated in our hands, while the orders coming in from England, in addition to the business intrusted to us from the northern states of the Ameri-



can Union, had very considerably increased our purchases. As I was in a situation to calculate the general posture of things with considerable accuracy, and had, especially, noticed that the English consumers would not give up their idea, of the imposing influence of Liverpool prices on the American cotton market, and would not hear of the independence and self-reliance of the French, or rather Havre market, which several of the houses in the latter port were, in their fancied importance striving to make a *marché régulateur*; and that the cypher of English commissions, given under the anticipation of a heavy demand, might unavoidably remain far behind the prices they were inclined to pay in France, my course appeared to be plainly enough marked out, not only to open our market with a firm hand, but likewise to control it, so long as the mass of my commissions might authorize such a position. The policy of this initiative was, as may be seen, forced upon me by circumstances, unless I was willing to yield the precedence to the coalition of Scottish houses, and then follow in their wake, as an imitator and dependent. My requirements were altogether too important and continual to permit my appearing in the market simultaneously with them, and performing the part of a usual competitor, which would, moreover, have been impossible, without occasioning a rise in prices, and would so have restricted my sphere of operations. The state of uncertainty in which my Scotch neighbors remained, touching my means for buying, also assisted me. They had been accustomed to collect and prepare their resources for making purchases about the close of summer, and during the autumn months, and were aided in their operations by remittances of silver from the neighboring branches of their head firms, established at Jamaica and in Mexico. Thus it was prettily accurately known in the bank that they had money ready, in sufficient amount at least to pay for the first important purchases, and in this way they had acquired a certain preponderance in the cotton market. It will not be forgotten that I am here speaking of a period when the American cotton crops were very far behind the immense development they have since attained—amounting, in 1823, to 700,000 bales, and, in 1851, to 3,100,000—and that the chief demand for the article was intrusted to but

re- hands, the most of foreign, even of English houses, concentrating their orders in my establishment. The Scotch houses, four in number, were rather speculators for the account of their principals, than the agents of English manufactories, or other correspondents. As I have already remarked, the resources of these houses could be in some measure calculated, but of mine no one could form any correct estimate. My competitors indulged in the delusion that these means must be limited, and would soon be exhausted, as they had not been able to see or hear of any preparation beforehand. They thought they could impose upon all parties by assuming a commanding attitude, and so depress the market at pleasure, by merely abstaining from making their purchases. I was contented with being forgotten, and consequently kept my bank credit a secret.

The earliest batches of the new crop, from the neighboring districts of Pointe Coupee, Fausse Riviere, Lafourche, and Baton Rouge, regularly came into the hands of four different cotton brokers, whom I will designate only by the letters A, B, C, and D, and who watched each other with the greatest jealousy. The closing price of the last crop had been eighteen cents, and it was not deemed proper to take less. However, the planters were anxious to receive their money soon, but the regular houses were shy, and held back. The brokers thereupon came repeatedly to me. I spoke of fifteen, and at the farthest sixteen cents for the best quality. Finally, A offered his quantum at sixteen cents, if B would accede to the same terms. So, whenever B learned from me that A was ready to sell at that price, then he declared that he would not hesitate to do the same thing. I thereupon made an appointment to meet both these gentlemen the next morning, at the well-known cotton-press of Rillieux, and even prevailed upon C and D to come. These four gentlemen were true to the rendezvous, and I desired A and B to fulfil their promise. They did so; and, owing to the anxiety of the owners to realize the price of their cotton, it was not difficult to coax C and D to the same terms. Thus the whole quantity, viz., 2,000 bales, then in the market, fell into my hands, and the market was instantly cleared. Fresh supplies were hurried in with greater speed than

ever, for the planters at once found out who the purchaser was, and learned from experience, that they could get the highest prices from me that circumstances seemed to warrant. They therefore hastened to avail themselves of a price which went so far beyond the cost of production, and gave them such considerable profit. I also was enabled to continue my purchases, and the pick and choice of the new supplies fell without interruption into my hands. If I frequently held back from purchasing, and had noticed a decline of prices, I still followed them, and in their fluctuations, between fifteen and sixteen cents, always maintained a position where I was ready to buy at any moment. In short, during the most active shipping season, namely, from December until the end of March, there were but few purchasers who could call themselves masters of any considerable quantity, from time to time, when they felt disposed. I had already concluded my purchases, which ran up to no less a quantity than 40,000 bales, as early as the first days in April, when, at length, a serious competition broke forth, which called for sixteen and a half cents. The shipments of my house were by this time completed, had nearly all arrived, and been advantageously sold, while my neighbors were still operating in New Orleans. The result of this anticipation of the market was very beneficial, and established our influence with planters, as well as with our neighbors and competitors. From this I was enabled to deduce a wholesome lesson, to the effect that neither combinations nor coalitions, to violently raise or lower the price of any imported article, such as cotton, can possibly succeed, since it is not given to human foresight to anticipate and count up every circumstance which may unexpectedly overthrow all such combinations. How much I would buy, and how much I was to pay for it, were matters that must escape all the foresight of my competitors; and it was precisely because they had tried to form their own conclusions in this respect, and had cast their conjectures in so wrong a direction, that it was so easy for me "to take the wind out of their sails," as nautical Englishmen would say. In the course of my life this item of experience has frequently been presented to me, without any participation, on my own part, as my readers will have occasion



to perceive hereafter, until at last, against my own convictions, and without either my will or my knowledge, I found myself involved in a combination of the kind, and became its innocent victim.

Just at this very time the present head of the Barings' house, Mr. Francis Baring, second son of the deceased Lord Ashburton, had arrived in New Orleans from Havana, and taken his quarters with me in my newly-built residence. We had nine large vessels receiving cargo at that moment, and he was evidently gratified when he took his first walk along the so-called *Levéé*—the quay on the left bank of the Mississippi, in front of the town, where vessels load and unload their freight—and saw it strown, from the upper to the lower suburb, with cotton bales, on which were stamped the marks of my firm. Nothing could have given him a better idea of our activity, and he seemed to be pleased that he could take back with him to Europe a proof of it, like this one, from his own experience.

Since there can be but little that relates to this establishment, which occupies and has occupied so lofty a position, that is devoid of all interest to the mercantile reader, I may venture to say a few words concerning Mr. Baring, who was quite a young man when he visited New Orleans. I do so with the greater reason, that he yields a proof the more of the fact, how rarely the combination of qualities belonging to a distinguished father descends to his sons. Bountiful nature had endowed this man, destined at so early a period of life to become the head and manager of the London house, with so lavish a hand, that it might almost be termed spendthrift profusion, in summing up the list of capacities and talents he possessed. To his mental wealth belonged most unusual intellectual superiority, rare keenness of perception, and an almost instinctive penetration of the opposite and diverse characters with which he was brought in contact; to these was added a remarkable memory, which did not lose the minutest circumstance; an iron strength of will, whenever he had made up his mind to perform any act; a perseverance in carrying out his enterprises, notwithstanding every obstacle; and, finally, the facility of expressing his ideas and convictions in a few words, and the knack of con-

veying the whole force and point of a close analysis, or criticism, in a happily selected phrase or two, which might be called "hitting the nail on the head." This latter talent, which is by no means an indispensable one, in the list of perfections desirable for a man of talent, nevertheless has its value in dialectic debates, particularly on the parliamentary floor, where young Baring hoped to stand before any great length of time, and in all instances of common life where brief and rapid explanations are desirable. An example will suffice to illustrate this remark. Young Baring was travelling through the western part of Virginia, which was at that time peopled by the roughest class of Americans, and the vehicle he used was a very handsome and newly-varnished travelling carriage. In accordance with the favorite custom of these wild fellows, who usually carried a pen-knife or a nail in their pockets, one of the idlers, who stood and leaned about the door of the tavern, where he had alighted for refreshment, amused himself by scratching, with a nail, all sorts of ridiculous figures on the varnish of the carriage doors. Baring, who came out of the inn, and caught our friend engaged in this agreeable and polite occupation, the instant he saw what was going on, very sharply expressed his disapprobation. The loiterer responded, "Look here, Sir, don't be saucy ; we make no ceremony. T'other day we had a European fellow here, like yourself, who was mighty saucy, so I pulled out my pistol and shot him dead, right on the spot. There he lies !" Baring rejoined, in the coolest manner imaginable, by asking, "And did you scalp him, too ?" The American was so struck with this, and felt this reproach upon his savage rudeness so keenly, that, after gazing at Baring suddenly and earnestly for a moment in silence, he exclaimed, "By God ! Sir, you must be a clever fellow ! let's shake hands !" It would not have been easy to give a sharper lesson.

After entering the house of his father and grandfather, where he had the keen-sighted S. C. Holland, now deceased, at his elbow, the creation of the new London "Alliance Marine Insurance Company," formed his debut. He came to an understanding on that subject with the Rothschilds, and a most successful business was the result. He then visited Mexico, where he fancied he had

found a magic wand, one wave of which would bring him in a gain of two millions or more. The city of Mexico lies in the midst of a small lake whose shores furnish it with fruit, vegetables, milk, game, and other articles required for its consumption. It had become usual to assign an immense value to these lands along the lake shore, basing the estimate upon the idea of their being indispensable. Young Baring, already a member of the London House, had managed to quietly ascertain the price that most of the owners would accept for this important property and had bought it all up together. The exact sum has been differently represented, but it went over £200,000, of which the fifth part had to be paid in cash. Baring drew a single bill on his House for £40,000, at three days' sight. The draft quickly reached London, before the firm had the least knowledge of the purpose for which it had been drawn; yet, it was the true hand-writing of an associate of the House, drawn upon it by him; thus much was evident at first sight, and the House was bound to pay. Notwithstanding this, Mr. Holland, the gentleman already named as a member of the establishment, alarmed at the sudden appearance of a bill for such a sum, rejected it, but wrote concerning it to the father of Mr. Alexander Baring, who, fortunately, was in England at "La Grange," his country-seat, about sixty-five English miles from London. He at once declared himself personally responsible for all obligations entered into by his son, as a member of the firm, and the draft was paid. The whole business was disapproved of, as it naturally had to be, for no House in the world could find it convenient to bury so large a capital, all at once, and on uncertain time, in a distant part of the globe. And now the question arose how they were to extricate themselves from this involvement. They, at length, managed to get a law passed by the Mexican Congress, prohibiting any one, who was not a Mexican by birth, and did not reside in the City of Mexico, from owning landed property within a certain given distance of the capital. In this way, the whole purchase was made null and void; they made up their minds in London to let the £40,000 go and forget all about it, as they could not expect to procure any reimbursement from those who had sold the lands.



After his return from Mexico, Francis Baring visited Paris, where he came in contact with the head partner of the firm of Reid, Irving & Co., which, at that time, although very undeservedly, as the sequel has shown, stood in great repute. This was Mr. John Irving, who had one of the most narrow business minds I have ever known; he was among the personal friends and supporters of another Scotch house at Havre, the Messrs. Firebrace, Davidson & Co.; to whom, through the influence of the London firm, important consignments of raw sugar were sent from Guadeloupe and Martinique. By the Vienna Treaty of 1815, these colonies, as every one knows, were restored by the English to France, but, as they had been in English possession for several years, and during that time had been permitted to enjoy equal privileges with the Colonies originally belonging to Great Britain, many of the plantations had fallen into the hands of English speculators, who determined to remain where they had settled. The consumption of sugar in France is almost exclusively based upon the production of these two islands; it has, of course, increased with the growth of population in France, and the fact, gradually, became evident, that the production of the French West Indies, at least with average crops, was no longer sufficient to satisfy the consumption, however confidently the legislators of France may have cherished the idea that the stimulus of an exclusive admission of French Colonial sugars, for home consumption, would contribute to a great increase of that production. It had been calculated that the 8,000 or 10,000 casks lying in the French ports, such as Havre, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseilles, might be simultaneously bought up and collected in one single hand, while, by means of orders sent off, before this general purchase, to the West Indian islands, the stock then disposable at Martinique and Guadeloupe might also be got hold of in the same way. Such a scheme was planned by Messrs. Firebrace, Davidson & Co. at Havre, and backed by a series of calculations, which made it palatable to Mr. John Irving; Mr. Francis Baring was readily allured by this, and when it was communicated, at last, to Mr. James Rothschild, the latter declared his willingness to join in the plan of buying up all the sugar in France. The project

was accordingly carried into execution ; but, when they came to sell again, unforeseen difficulties arose. The French sugar refiners would not purchase at the advanced prices any more than was absolutely necessary to keep their establishments in motion, and during the delay thus occasioned, it came out that the colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe could send much more sugar into the market than they could have anticipated, notwithstanding the calculations they had drawn up with so much accuracy and care. What had, up to that time, been known but by few, and had always been kept a secret, was now made plain to everybody. As the markets in the French Colonies began to rise, the merchants in the neighboring English Colonies of Barbadoes, Antigua, etc., had managed to send a part of their supply to their French neighbors by a very simple and easy system of smuggling; and this additional quantity was shipped and carried to France, as the product of the country. Thus, more sugar came in than was required, and the prices could not be maintained. Messrs. Firebrace, Davidson & Co., who had made the first purchases on account of Messrs. Baring, Rothschild, and Reid, Irving & Co., had been allured into speculating largely on their own account, and, consequently, bought in all the sugar that was to be had, at Bordeaux. When the sudden cessation and decline of prices began, and they found it impossible to sell, they were obliged to suspend payment, and made over the 8,000 or 9,000 casks of sugar they had bought for the London coalition to the house of Messrs. Hottinguer & Co. What then took place? Nothing but what, according to the ideas of the Havre Bourse, at that time, deserved to be called a perfectly legitimate transaction. The commission houses of the French sugar refineries, at Havre, secretly concluded upon a combined purchase, in which the sellers were quietly to retain a portion for themselves, and Mr. Bourlet, the head of the Hottinguer house, who had a particular fondness for purchases "en blocq," transferred the whole quantity to a single purchaser, who gave his name. This was the last transaction that Mr. Francis Baring went into on his own authority.

The death of Mr. S. C. Holland, the so-called managing partner, brought about in 1825, a change in the organization of the Baring

house. At first, some embarrassment was experienced in filling his place properly. Mr. Joshua Bates of Boston, formerly the London agent for the important house of Mr. William Gray, in Boston and Salem, had, a couple of years before the decease of Mr. Holland, set up a commission house in company with John, the third son of Sir Thomas Baring, Bart., under the firm of Bates & Baring. Bates, who had long been known and respected by his fellow-citizens in Boston and in Salem, was in the possession of a London business which required greater cash and credit means than the young house could control. It was about £20,000 that John Baring had brought into the firm, and it was said that Bates had not the command of a larger sum. The character and peculiar mode of transacting the business of Mr. Holland had frightened away many of the best American mercantile connections from the Baring house. He had only one measure for *all* the American houses, without distinction, and applied the same rule to each and every one of them. Houses like that of James and Thomas H. Perkins, in Boston, or John Jacob Astor at New York, whose wealth and credit were undoubted, and who, through mere motives of convenience, since they were paying only five per cent. at London, while money was worth seven, eight, and ten per cent. in New York, used to leave large debits in the account-current standing for some time, at the close of the year, without making immediate remittances for the same, were reminded of their arrearage on the book in postscripts written by Mr. Holland, himself, and usually couched in very sharp language. Thus, the Messrs. Barings had lost among many others, Astor as a correspondent, and similar important connections, and by this means were frequently compelled to let superfluous capital lie idle, which might otherwise have been well employed. Hence, it was wise policy on the part of this house, to follow the counsel of Mr. P. C. Labouchère, and allow the house of Messrs. Bates & Baring to dissolve, and then receive it under the general name of its own firm. Mr. Thomas Baring, who had found in the house of Hope, at Amsterdam, no occupation suited to his talents and his business spirit, also entered the London house, which now, besides Mr. Alexander Baring himself, consisted of his son Francis,



his two nephews John and Francis Baring, and Mr. Bates. In the year 1828, Mr. Alexander Baring, who was then anticipating his elevation to the Chamber of Peers, resolved to retire from the house he had hitherto conducted, and let his son-in-law Mr. Humphrey St. John Mildmay, enter it. The latter gentleman was a brother of Sir Harry Mildmay, Bart., (who won so wide a reputation in the English gay world), and until his admission into this partnership had been a Brevet-Captain in the Royal Life Guards. There then remained five associates, Mr. Francis Baring, Mr. H. St. John Mildmay, Mr. Joshua Bates, and the two brothers, Thomas and John Baring. The principle was then laid down for the management of the house, that henceforth no business should be entered into without the assent of three partners, and that since it might be foreseen, that the two associates most nearly related to Mr. Alexander Baring, namely, his son Francis, and his son-in-law, Mildmay, would generally be apt to vote on one side, and the two nephews, Thomas and John, on the other, thus leaving to Mr. Bates the casting vote; an arrangement was made, by which Francis and John were removed from all participation in any new business, and were to be called upon for their votes only when the active managers, Messrs. Thomas Baring, Mildmay, and Bates could not agree. Since that time, Mr. Francis Baring has occupied himself but little with the general transaction of business for the house, but after marrying the daughter of Napoleon's former Secretary of State, Maret, Duke of Bassano, at Paris, settled permanently in the latter city, where he bought one of the most magnificent palatial residences on the Place Vendôme, at no less an expense than 1,600,000 francs.

From this it will be perceived, that although destined to have had such a career, it was not given him to follow in his father's footsteps as a mercantile and financial authority of the highest order. In the Lower House of Parliament, where he was a member for Thetford, and had hoped to shine, he likewise completely failed in his attempts to reach political importance. He had inherited from his father, a stuttering, hesitating delivery, which was pardoned in the latter, because he had become one of the most distinguished of England's remarkable men, and because

his opinion always deserved and commanded respect. But these advantages did not reside in the son, and he wearied his hearers. Upon one occasion, when he had obtained permission to bring forward a Bill in relation to New Zealand, and was about to speak, the members, as is customary in the Lower House, when they do not wish to listen, one after another withdrew, and he was soon reduced to silence for want of a proper quorum which required the presence of forty members. Fate seemed to deny Mr. Francis Baring success, in everything he undertook, where his natural, and assuredly not reprehensible ambition, made the object desirable—an observation which I have not made without some regret, for the friendship he has ever shown me, and his independent, manly character have endeared him to me. I have elsewhere remarked, that after the death of his elder brother, the present Lord Ashburton, who lives in childless celibacy, both title and property will pass to Francis Baring; or, in case of his previous decease, to his eldest son. Before the birth of this son, a doubt arose in the family, whether he, being born in France, could be the rightful heir, according to the English law, since his father had first seen the light at Philadelphia and his mother at Paris, while the child's grandmother had, likewise, been born at Philadelphia. The legal advisers of the British crown and other counsel were consulted, and their decision was affirmative, on the ground that a British subject retains his rights to the third generation, and can neither lose them nor divest himself of them. Had the decision been of an opposite character, the offer made by Lord Grenville, the English ambassador at Paris, would have been accepted, and the accouchement would have taken place within the walls of the British Legation.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE CONVERSION OF THE FRENCH FIVE PER CENT. RENTES.

My reception in Havre in the summer of 1822—James Lafitte, the Paris banker—A Sunday at his country-seat—"Maison sur Seine," a former pleasure palace of Louis XIV—The Marquis of Lansdowne—Exorbitant price of cotton—The general improper conduct of speculators at Havre and Rouen—The only exception—A merchant's morality—Breach of trust of one of the first houses in Havre, to the injury of Mr. P. C. Labouchère, its great patron—The combination of Messrs. Cropper, Benson & Co., and Rathbone, Hodgson & Co., to bring about a fresh rise in the prices of cotton, which had gone down—An offer made, inviting me to join in this project, which, as I had foreseen, proved impracticable—A visit to Hamburgh, in the winter of 1823-24—Return to Paris—Project of the French Minister of Finance, the Marquis de Villèle, for the conversion of the whole national debt into, five per cent Rentes—Rivalry of the Vicomte de Chateaubriand, who succeeds in defeating the scheme, but without being able to unseat the Marquis—By this he loses his own place in the ministry—First acquaintance with General Lafayette; his desire, after an interval of forty years, to revisit the United States—His embarrassed pecuniary situation—Successful attempt, on my part, to procure the sum of 100,000 francs for him—He is thereby enabled to undertake the desired journey, and starts upon it—Miss Wright, his protégée—The Paris Bourse, after the failure of Villèle's scheme—Well-meant but enigmatically-worded advice of Mr. Francis Baring, in regard to the five per cent. Rente—He fails in his object to save me from an important loss.

I AGAIN resume the thread of my own history, which I dropped in the spring of 1820, after my return to New Orleans, in the month of May. Shortly after my return I was enabled to gratify a long-deferred wish. The wish was for a good wife, whose goodness of heart and disposition might insure me the homely happiness which men seek for in the married life. Of bachelorhood I was heartily weary. The daughter of a former naval officer in



the French service, Févé by name, who, in the year of the emigration to Charleston, had come over and died there, appeared to me to possess all necessary qualifications. Her mother, after her widowhood, removed to New Orleans, and there I learned to know my Lisida, even in her childhood. Her captivating and agreeable manners soon won me; and, as Louisiana was poorly furnished with instructors, prompted me to complete her education, giving to it all the attention which my predilection for her caused in me. During my absence of nearly a year and a half from New Orleans she had become a blooming maiden, who won all hearts, but made a deeper impression upon none more than mine. At my return she greeted me with a true childlike affection, and a few months afterward she became mine. In the matrimonial lottery I have had the good luck to draw a prize. My wife, who is remarkable, not only for rare beauty, but for good tact—that substitute for a powerful mind which good Nature grants to women—won, not only in New Orleans, but later, in the great society of a city like Paris, the title, *belle et bonne*, and has been to me a faithful, loving, stéadfast, well-tried, and courageous companion through life, as the reader will more fully learn in the ensuing pages. She has borne me five children, two boys and three girls, the youngest of whom died soon after its birth. I have also had the misfortune to lose both my sons just as they had attained manhood, and were full of good promise. My eldest daughter is the wife of Mr. Buhner, chief of division in the ministry of state, and in the department *de la Maison de l'Empereur*.

Late in the summer of 1822 the affairs of my house required a visit to Europe, and I departed. I landed at Havre. Here I was received by the whole Exchange, not merely with distinction, but with a sort of jubilee. In connection with all the first houses, I had executed all their commissions, sent cotton to all, and put money into the purses of all. My appearance at the Exchange was the signal of the gathering of a little court about me, and for the offering of numberless *dejeuners dinatoires* and dinners. Had it been possible to deceive myself, as to the source of this reception and this *impressement*, I had but to cast a glance at the shore of the sea, in the immediate neighborhood of the port. There I

saw the great Chateaubriand, then in the zenith of his glory, companionless, wandering lonely and forsaken on the shore, pursuing his own dreams or inspirations. He merited this visible neglect as little as I my distinguished welcome; that I felt in my heart. His merits rested upon a pedestal that, with progressing time, would lift him ever higher; mine consisted in a well calculated lucky operation in the cotton market, offered by opportunity, and the consequences of which lost their importance, even in the very next year, as will be seen in the sequel.

I had more or less extensive connections with all the great bankers of Paris, except Jacques Lafitte, who, as a native Frenchman—he came from Bayonne—kept himself at the head of the others, who were mostly Swiss. A very pressing letter of introduction, from Alexander Baring himself, made me at length acquainted with him. He was then owner of the former Hotel de l'Empire, and had his various offices on the ground floor. His own counting-room was in a great hall, where, upon a very broad dais of mahogany, four steps high, stood his huge writing desk. Before him, at the foot of the dais, were some twenty arm-chairs, in half circle; behind him, right and left, a dozen speaking tubes in the hall served as means of communication with the heads of the various departments which composed his establishment. The arrangements were princely. As I entered I found most of the arm-chairs filled by exchange brokers. I mounted the four steps, and presented to the chief of this gathering my letter of introduction, which, after a glance at its contents, he laid behind him, and graciously waved me to one of the empty chairs. After some minutes a word was whispered into one of the speaking tubes, and a clerk appeared from within, to whom Mr. Lafitte gave my letter, and then beckoned to me. With all due reverence I drew near his mercantile majesty, and received from his own mouth a polite invitation to visit him on next Sunday, at the *Maison sur Seine*, a country-seat which he had just purchased from government and which Louis XIV. had built. "Come early," he said, "and we will talk at our ease, while promenading in the park." I made my appearance on Sunday, about three o'clock, was received by the steward, and shown into the reception rooms, library, billiard

room, saloon, etc., after which I was told that I would find M. Lafitte walking in the park. Thereupon I took for my companion an elderly Englishman, who appeared to be boring himself in the library. We soon met the master of the house, in company with two very simply-dressed, well-mannered Englishmen, one of whom wore something then unusual in French society—a summer costume, white drilling trowsers, fine cotton stockings and shoes. Both spoke French well. The perfection of English cotton manufactures appeared to be the topic of conversation; and when we returned to the house I had decided that the two gentlemen were great Manchester spinners. M. Lafitte, as usual, led the conversation, as the French say, “*il tenait la corne* ;” that is, he spoke out whatsoever came into his head, interrupting others, and starting countless topics that had nothing to do with the matter in hand. On reaching the drawing-rooms we found Madame Lafitte, with her only daughter, now the Princess de la Moskowa, and several gentlemen, most of them opposition deputies in the chamber, among them M. Cassimir Perrier and M. Grammont, to whom M. Lafitte introduced me personally. At table one of the Englishmen was placed at Madame Lafitte’s right hand, the other at her husband’s. I concluded, by this distribution of the places of honor, that they must be, probably, owners of several great cotton factories, with enormous credits at Lafitte’s, which regulated the proportion of his great politeness to them. M. Lafitte, whose talkativeness had as yet found no obstacle, rattled away. He told a great deal about the “hundred days,” and said he had never admired Napoleon; and that during the time when he was daily sent for, and consulted by the emperor, he had learned to know him well, and had discovered that he possessed the art of making himself popular in the highest degree. “He was quite confidential with me,” said Lafitte, “spoke without any retinence, and once made to me a notable remark about our nation. ‘The French,’ he said, ‘are a people whom one must know how to govern with arms of iron, but with velvet gloves.’” My readers may have heard this; but a remark which fell from the lips of Madame Lafitte’s right hand neighbor is newer. “Right,” said he, “it is so—but he very often forgot to put his gloves on.” This was



so true, and so apropos, that all who heard it burst out laughing. I asked my next neighbor who the witty gentleman was, and learned, to my surprise, that he was no less a person than the celebrated Marquis of Lansdowne; his companion was Lord Bristol.

After dinner M. Lafitte continued his discoursing, and displayed great power of retaining the attention of his guests: he always had a little circle round him which I joined the more willingly because it gave me an opportunity to observe the remarkable superiority of an English parliamentary speaker, like Lord Lansdowne, over a French *faiseur de discours*, and phrase-hunter. Lafitte, in his attempts to develop and render comprehensible the use and method of the French Chamber of Deputies, met with constant difficulties in the answers and remarks of his English listener. "*Faire preuve de capacité*," said he, "*c'est le premier devoir d'un député quand il s'agit de parler*." The simple answer of the Marquis was, "*chez nous on ne prend la parole que pour pousser à la roue et avancer les affaires—to do the business of the nation—comme nous disons en Anglais*."

The fortunate issue of the important operation in cotton, to which my concurrence in the winter of 1820-21, had so materially contributed, created in my French correspondents a veritable greediness to renew and extend their operations in the next winter season. Important commissions, many of them without restriction or limitation as to price, as well as considerable sums of money poured into my house, and as there was a prospect of an immense English demand for the raw material, the factors of the planters understood the position of things as well as the usual great purchasers did, and being enabled to count upon a demand upon the production market, kept the prices very high. Instead of sixteen cents, with which a year before I had opened the market, twenty and twenty-one cents were offered, a price which surpassed the cost of the shipments of the past year by 30 per cent. and over. The European markets held back until the first arrival of new goods should come into market. Then, however, prices began to fall as rapidly as they had risen, and an average loss of 20 to 25 per cent. on the purchases made, became unavoidable. My house had kept itself to the letter of its

commissions, and all those who had paid money kept the cotton which they had ordered, because they could not get out of the scrape. But all the paper given by my house was allowed to be protested upon the slightest pretext. The house of Hottinguer & Co., in Paris, received the returned purchase and took our paper as far as they could get possession of it. There resulted from this, no less than five law-suits, which were settled by arbitration, and one fierce process that endured for three years. All these cases were decided in our favor; but the want of truth and of ordinary commercial honesty of many of our correspondents who had so caressed and courted me the year before, was without example. Every means was made use of by these men to avoid the necessity of keeping the losing purchases for their own account. One M. Morel Fatio, who had played an important part as *Coulissier* in the Paris stock exchange, and afterwards did a heavy business in cotton, at Rouen in 1822, threw back upon us 200 bales of cotton, before he had even seen them, under the pretext that he had ordered "prime quality" (without limitation of price), that all the New Orleans houses advertised "prime quality" at nineteen cents, and that as our factor only asked seventeen and a half cents it could not, possibly, be "prime quality."

One exception to this scandalous course which seemed to have become the rule, must not be left unrecorded: I refer to the firm of Victor Elie Lefevre & Sons, Rouen. This firm had sent us the reimbursement of our paper in a draft upon the London house of Barandon & Co. When our drafts were presented and accepted, this house had received the money from Rouen to pay them, but failed before the acceptances fell due, and Lefevre lost the amount. He did not, however, delay one moment, but immediately instructed another house in London to take measures for the payment of our paper. Besides the loss of this capital, Lefevre had also to bear the loss of the cotton bought on his account, and accepted by him, and for which he was thus obliged to pay twice. I have considered it so much the more my duty to set down the honorable act of a Rouen house, not so much because of the strict fulfilment of mercantile obligations under the

circumstances, as because of the rarity of the occurrence in that part of the world ; for the natives of Normandy, and the houses of Rouen and Havre, do not enjoy the best reputation, and in the art of overreaching, and the practice of cheating, are usually considered as masters. From this quarter, as already remarked, I derived my bitterest and most abundant experience.

One word about the morality of a merchant. He who does not positively despair of the possibility of an exact and strict observation of the laws of trade and commerce, must at least confess that he has fallen upon the exceptions far oftener than upon common instances. It is often said and believed of politics, that that science cannot be bound by the customary laws of morality, or in other words, that the common acceptation of the words Right and Wrong, must undergo a considerable modification when those words are politically employed—then *judiciousness* decides,—and whatever is judicious must be right. One may say about the same of commerce ; if we allow that all that is “on the books,” as merchants say, is right, because it is judicious, which means no more than that it brings the money in. According to the ideas of the day, wealth has taken the place of worth, which was the object once of the merchant’s ambition. Whether the practice of this principle violate the conscience of the honest man or not, if he adopt any measure simply because it is judicious, he cannot in trade, justify himself by saying “the end sanctifies the means.” In politics, the recognition of this principle meets with but few difficulties, and fifty years’ experience has taught me, that in commerce also, it is oftener followed than neglected. Out of many such experiences let me record one incident : during a confidential reading of this chapter to Mr. Alexander Baring, he gave to the conduct of the merchants in Havre, the name of “felony.”

In the autumn of 1824, as I have already remarked, the Liverpool cotton market showed the greatest probability of a rise in prices. The house of Hottinguer & Co., in Havre, at the head of which was M. Bourlet, a practical, experienced man of business, was several times urged by the house of Cropper, in Liverpool—in whose house young Hottinguer, now head of the Havre house, was a clerk—to go into an operation in cotton; M.



Bourlet, however, gave evasive answers, and the matter fell through. At the same time Mr. Daniel Willink, of Amsterdam, established in Liverpool, had greatly befriended Mr. P. C. Labouchère, and kept up a regular correspondence with him, from his estate Hylands, in the neighborhood of Chelmsford, in Essex County. He entered heartily into Cropper's ideas, and offered to trust him with a certain amount of capital for the operation, which appeared to promise great gain; only conditioning that the purchase should not be delayed. M. Labouchère determined quickly, and at once sent express to Havre, and commissioned Messrs. Hottinguer to purchase for him 3,000 bales of cotton. The express reached Havre late in the evening of Saturday. The entire disposable quantity of cotton in Havre was 10,000 bales, nearly all of which was in the hands of Hottinguer & Co., and Thuret & Co. On Sunday morning the merchants assembled as usual at the *Bourse du Canon*, to wait for the arrival of the Paris mail. A decided possession of the market was not only possible but certain; but to succeed, it must be executed by the broker Lefevre, because he possessed the entire confidence both of buyers and sellers. He was the man usually employed by the most extensive purchasers, the house of Guerard, Dupasseur & Co., and their interests lay naturally near his heart. M. Bourlet, as soon as he saw a person like M. Labouchère entering earnestly into a cotton speculation, changed suddenly his own views, and recognized the operation as an unfailing one. Thereupon he sent for the broker Lefevre, and in order to avoid the peril of a betrayal, which might throw the whole affair into other hands, he invited the Messrs. Guerard, Dupasseur & Co. to a consultation. A share in the purchase of the whole quantity, 10,000 bales, was also offered to M. Delaunay, at that time head of the firm of Thuret & Co., in Havre; and the two houses agreed to the entire purchase, the house of Guerard alone appearing as buyers. It was also determined that Hottinguer and Thuret should offer all their cotton for sale, and that the broker Lefevre should try to get possession of all smaller quantities. My house then possessed 500 bales, stored with Messrs. Hottinguer, and 300 with Thuret. Our agent, M. Emanuel Bernoulli, was by accident in Havre. It is

not necessary to say here in what manner he became acquainted with the foregoing circumstances, but he lost no time in going to M. Bourlet, and telling him, resolutely, "Whatsoever occurs in the cotton market, all further sale of Nolte's cotton must be stopped. You must not sell a single bale without directions from me." Then he went to M. Delaunay, and made the same remark to him; but he was answered with the completest sangfroid, "*Vous arrivez trop tard, mon ami. Vos cotons sont déjà vendus.* The 300 bales had thus fallen into the hands of this worthy speculator. At once it was rumored about the exchange, that the entire stock in Havre had fallen into the hands of Messrs. Guérard, Dupasseur & Co. On Monday morning the post brought news of a rise of prices in the Liverpool market, the instant consequence of which was a rise of three francs a hundred weight, which went still higher soon after. M. Labouchère was written to, that the Havre purchasers had gotten the start of him, and had thwarted the fulfilment of his commission; it was thought, however, that a similar outlay of capital in cotton-yarn at Rouen would be judicious, inasmuch as the prices of this had not been affected by the news. Bourlet knew with whom he had to do, when he reckoned upon the cheapening of this improper acquisition; instead of a regular rise in the first months of the year 1825, it gave a very meagre result. M. Labouchère had learned nothing about the foregoing circumstances, nor the head of the Paris house, the elder M. Hottinguer, whose straightforward, honest spirit would have severely condemned the action of his associates. I have already remarked, that in the United States, overreaching goes for cleverness, and there this act would probably be called "a capital combination." How very few merchants, indeed, are there out of England who, like Mr. Alexander Baring, would give it a very different appellation!

The commerce of New Orleans, destined to so mighty a future, and which had begun its increase the second year after the treaty of Ghent, in 1814, was obliged in the city itself to contend with the greatest difficulties, because of the miserable condition of the streets, the highways, and the dykes of the river, which threw a thousand hindrances in the way of trade's advancement. The

legislation about city interests was in the hands of the mayor and a council, almost entirely composed of native, *i. e.*, ignorant creoles, who, during the first years of peace, thought of nothing, and used their influence for nothing but the protection of their own personal interests; and troubled themselves exceedingly little about the common-weal. The mayor himself, Rouffignac by name, was a native of France, formerly a cavalry officer in the Spanish service, had the best will in the world, was an honest, practical person, but yet so perfectly uninstructed that he feared to trust himself or any other man. So it happened that nearly six years went by, before they took the slightest action towards the improvement of the streets. In 1821 New Orleans did not possess one single paved street. Through the city ran four feet wide side-walks, which were called *banquettes*, and which ran along close to the houses. They were made of brick set loosely in the sand, and in wet weather became almost utterly useless, since nearly every step of the pedestrian produced a spirt of liquid mud from between the loose bricks. The streets themselves were nothing but mud holes, with occasional projecting bits of dried clod. In 1822 the city council recognized the necessity of some improvement, and it was determined that the principal street, called Rue Royale, should be paved. The cost of this pavement was calculated at \$300,000, while the revenue of the city amounted only to \$60,000 or \$70,000 per annum. Leases of tenements and lands belonging to the city, and the yearly sale of part of them, the results of public sales, etc., made up this sum. Finally, they determined to make an effort to borrow the money; a committee of the city council was appointed, and this committee immediately waited upon me, requesting the loan at an interest of 7 per cent, payable half yearly; the money to be retained so long as they might require it. I could find no means of rendering comprehensible to these gentlemen the fact that no capitalist could be discovered who would lend upon such terms; particularly none in Europe, whither they appeared to be looking: that they must borrow the money for a certain specified time, etc. At length I succeeded in proposing an acceptable project for a loan. That the city should receive a cash payment of \$150,000, to be



followed the next year by a similar sum, giving its obligation to repay the sum in ten years, with interest at the rate of 98 per cent. for that time. I also naturally arranged to have certificates of stock, all bearing the same date of emission, to be held as compensation for the yearly interest on the second half of the loan, while I paid in the sum in solid, well secured planter's notes, which had one year to run. These notes were in the money-market, at a discount of from 15 to 18 per cent., and the difference of interest, which amounted to about \$13,000, and which the council could have gained had they chosen; but by their neglect of it, it fell to me. The Messrs. Barings sold me these notes with a bonus of 17 per cent., and the whole operation brought me in a net profit of \$65,000. This was the forerunner of a later advance made by the Barings to the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana, and which somewhat surpassed a couple of millions. This business was conducted, some years after the ruin of my house, by Mr. Alexander Baring, who visited New Orleans for the purpose.

The stock of cotton which the stimulus already spoken of, had gathered and left unsaleable in many European markets, particularly Liverpool, of course caused great anxiety about the new American crop, in the minds of all who had made advances, and to whom shipments would not guaranty a return. The great quaker house of Cropper, Benson & Co., were at the head of the firms who found themselves in this position. Whether it were a proper comprehension of the real position, and look of the whole European cotton market, in reference to the stock on hand, and the supply to be imported, or only an experiment to awaken the spirit of speculation, and to cause a rise in prices; in brief, this house exhibited a general manifest, in which by a variety of calculations it strove to show by logical conclusions and reckonings, that the production of cotton had its limit, and that in consequence of the abolition of the slave trade, and the annual decrease of the colored population,\* as well as by the natural restrictions which

\* This argument was precisely one of the most feeble in the logic of the Croppers. Five years before, the colored census was 1,538,060; and in 1830, thirty years later, 3,176,330, a yearly increase of 54,609 souls.

northern latitudes place upon cotton growing, that the necessary and approaching consequence must be, that the importation would become daily less, and obtainable only at very high prices, and that from this would result—so at least they believed—that the consumption would far exceed the production, and make the cost of cotton immensely high. This manifest was disseminated with a certain pomp over all the cotton manufacturing cities of England and the United States. People read it with interest, but it failed of its object, and had very slight effect upon the cotton market. The thoughtful houses of Havre and Rouen, called it “*échauffaudage pour faire monter les prix*,” and in Liverpool and Manchester they were distrustful, and appeared to remember the calculation, by means of which the firm of Cropper had prophesied a poor crop of wheat, and high prices only a few years before. They went so far as to send their agents into every part of England to calculate the general yield of ears in the wheat fields of the various districts, and the average number of grains in the ears, in order to strike a parallel with the yield of grains in fruitful and abundant crops, and so to support their prophecy with reference to prices. All the calculations failed; the crop was a good general crop, and speculators, among whom were the Messrs. Cropper themselves, lost very heavily. Their very important share in the speculations which followed these calculations, proved in this instance, the uprightness of their conviction; but in respect of the cotton manifest that appeared later, I had no opportunity to divine the concealed objects. I had visited Liverpool in the course of the summer of 1823, and found that the general voice of the exchange there was not prophetic of a rise in the price of cotton. In the house of Cropper a hint was given me that other views might possibly be correct. Thereupon, I betook myself to Manchester, to look around me among my friends there. This occurred about the time of the Doncaster races, where Mr. William Garnet (of the then important house of Messrs. Robert & William Garnet), had determined to go in his own carriage, and invited me to accompany. I had scarcely accepted, and so written to my friend Adam Hodgson, then partner in the house of Rathbone, Hodgson & Co., that I at once

received in answer, a most urgent letter, urging me, instead of thinking of the Doncaster races, to weigh carefully an event which must infallibly occur in the cotton market; that my co-operation was necessary to him, and therefore, he begged me to return at once to Liverpool. I obeyed the call, and betook myself directly to Liverpool. On my arrival, he pointed out to me, that he must take me at once to the Messrs. Cropper, and there it would be shown to me in the strictest secrecy, that an entirely new view of the condition of things was to be taken. When we reached the place, the elder Mr. James Cropper, head of the firm, was in his *sanctum sanctorum*, a homely sort of chamber, which touched the great hall of the general counting-room, and possessed a double iron door. Into this chamber we were mysteriously introduced by one of the partners, Mr. David Hodgson, and after our entrance, the head of the greatest cotton broker firm, Mr. Cooke, of the firm of Cooke & Cowen, was sent for; meanwhile, the already mentioned, ever ready manifesto, was exhibited. Mr. Cooke was sent for to prove to me that a demand for the exportation of 10,000 bales of cotton to Havre, where the market appeared to have been neglected, must infallibly shake the ordinary buyers and spinners in Manchester and Glasgow; and already a rise in the prices was evident, as would soon be visible to all. In the expectation that I would not refuse my assent and co-operation to a plan formed by him, and that I would associate myself with their representatives, David and Adam Hodgson; Messrs. Cropper had resolved to send both of these gentlemen to Havre, in order to unite in one house commissions for the purchase, in Liverpool, of 10,000 bales for Havre; as it was clear that the speculation would be a good one for both places, as it would prove the result of the manifesto, so soon as it came to general knowledge. My society, I said, was very much at the service of those gentlemen, but their project must positively fail, particularly if they were to go directly to Havre. On the first knowledge of the object of such a voyage taken by the heads of two important Liverpool houses, the idea would suggest itself to people that there must be an under design—to wit: if the speculation was so sure and infallible, as they appeared to think, folks



would be certain to ask what the established house, in union with their numerous friends could gain by sending 10,000 bales of cotton on their own account to Havre. My advice was, not to go by Southampton to Havre, but by Dieppe to Rouen, where I would make them acquainted with a leading merchant who thoroughly understood the French cotton market, and who would place them at once in the exact position to judge of the whole matter. My advice was taken. We went by London direct to Rouen, and here I presented my companions to M. Edward Quesnel l'Ainé. A conversation took place. On his correction of their ideas as to the nature of a Havre merchant, they saw so clearly the impossibility of continuing their project, that they themselves, proposed to accompany me to Paris, and so by Holland back to England. On this occasion I could not help recalling that expression of Lafontaine's, "*Jean s'en alla comme il était venu.*"

From Holland, whither I had accompanied my friends, I went to Hamburg. Here memories of my early youth were still vivid in the hearts of most of my acquaintances, and I found my boyhood's friends, with one exception, in good health and circumstances. I found also that both my parents were well, although my father had already for some years been afflicted with total blindness. Early in January, 1824, I went to Paris again, and there learned that the speedy arrival of Mr. Alexander Baring and his family was expected.

The project of the minister-president, Marquis de Villèle, to convert the state debt from five per cents to three per cents gave rise to this visit. It was proposed to pay off with a round sum those who were disinclined to exchange their claims which bore five per cent. interest for new three per cent. claims, and to take seventy-five francs for every hundred. The whole state debt amounted to 3,066,783,560 francs; and as it was shown that only about one-third of the state creditors would consent to the conversion, a payment in cash of 1,055,556,720 francs became necessary. In order to collect this important capital, the whole financial power of England, Holland and France must be called into exercise. Invitations in all directions assembled the leaders of

the Paris and London Exchanges—Messrs. Baring Brothers & Co., of London, Brothers Rothschild and J. Lafitte & Co., of Paris—to no very difficult task, namely, to arrange in three lists the capitalists of various lands with whom they were connected, especially those of London, Amsterdam, and Paris, at the head of each list being one of themselves. Thereupon, under the presidency of Mr. Alexander Baring, a committee was appointed, composed of Baron James Rothschild and Mr. Jacques Lafitte, to treat of the conversion with the Marquis of Villèle in exchange, and to procure ready money for the payment of the old state debt. This committee sat daily in the house of the Brothers Rothschild, and sat the longer because of the inexhaustible eloquence of M. Lafitte, about the advantages to accrue from the conversion and all matters connected with it—an eloquence which claimed all the attention of his colleagues, and, as I learned from Mr. Baring, with whom, conformably to his desires, I breakfasted nearly every day, drove them frequently into positive impatience. The secret plan of the holders of the 3 per cent. debt was to raise it to 80, and then to sell it, and so get rid of it. This price would give to buyers an interest of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and if the portion of the debt to be paid off could not be raised, excepting by new 3 per cent. purchasers at 80, the consequence would be, that the 5 per cent. before the conversion would be worth the relative price of 106 francs  $66\frac{2}{3}$ , in order to get rid of the corresponding interest. This governed the operations of the London, Frankfort, Amsterdam, and Paris Exchanges. The capital destined for the conversion, and collected at the common cost of the representatives of the three lists, was estimated at 1,000 millions. Speculators had conceived so favorable an idea of the 3 per cent funds to be created—an idea based on the belief that the undertakers would not bring it into circulation under 80—that buyers were found in Amsterdam and Frankfort at 81·82, and even 83 $\frac{1}{2}$ . At the same time important sales were made of French 5 per cent. state paper, at the relative price of from 106 francs 67 to 110. Nothing more was to be had. The project of M. de Villèle needed, in order to become a legal operation, the sanction of the two chambers, and caused important debates. Opinions about the judiciousness,

and even about the legality of the conversion, were widely different. Meanwhile the ministry possessed, in the chamber of deputies, an immense majority of three hundred and more, whom the wits were accustomed to speak of as "M. de Villèle's three hundred Spartans;" so that while a doubt of the success of the project was scarcely possible, it was yet a critical matter to open a debate with the small holders of the Rent, to whom countless deputies belonged—it was aiming at their purses. The funny men of Paris did not let the occasion slip. The Rue d'Artois (now Rue Lafitte), in which lived Mr. Alexander Baring, on the corner of the Boulevard, in the Hotel d'Artois, Baron James Rothschild, in the hotel formerly belonging to the queen of Holland, and Mr. Lafitte, in his own hotel, corner of Rue de Provence, was called "*la Rue de la Réduction*;" and the keepers of cafés in the neighborhood, who had formerly given five lumps of sugar to a cup of coffee now gave but three, "on account of the reduction," as they said. When the project of the conversion came to a hearing in the chamber of deputies, it passed by a majority of sixty-eight. This, in ordinary circumstances, would have been considered a large majority; but, contrasted with the usual majority of M. de Villèle, it was looked on as very small, and served as a certain proof the project of the finance minister found many opponents, even among his well-disciplined hangers on.

In the Chamber of Peers people were more independent of ministerial influence, and the conversion found an important opponent in the person of the minister for foreign affairs, M. le Vicomte de Chateaubriand. He had a personal rancor, nourished in silence, against the M. de Villèle. The question of the conversion, supposed to be a national one, became, in the chamber of peers, a personal one. It came to the point, whether the influence of the Marquis de Villèle, or that of the Vicomte de Chateaubriand, would prove the more powerful: and, as to the judiciousness of the conversion, people, as often happens in France, snapped their fingers. The marquis, as I learned from Mr. Baring, had included in his calculations every single voice in the chamber of peers; he knew well both the *pro* and *con*, and reckoned confidentially on a majority of eighteen votes for his project. The voting at length



took place, and Villèle was defeated by a majority of twelve voices. For a while Chateaubriand was victorious. This took place on a Friday. The day before the 5 per cent. Rents had been quoted at 106 francs; but at the close of the Exchange, on Saturday evening, they had fallen to 98. The agitation among Parisians, especially in the business world, was immeasurable. Villèle and Chateaubriand had spoken to each other at the royal mass on Sunday, at the Tuilleries, on which occasion the former very politely informed the latter that he would find a very important dispatch awaiting him at home. On this Sunday the vicomte had invited the most important ministers and diplomatists in Paris to dinner. So soon as he reached home he opened the dispatch; it contained the command to send in his portfolio, as he had been replaced. When his guests had arrived, and taken their places at the dinner-table, the vicomte informed them that this was the last occasion on which he could have the honor to receive them in this way, as in the morning, he said, laughingly, his ministerial course would be run—he had been “*remplacé*.” The news was spread far and wide the same evening, in the usual haunt of the notabilities, the *foyer de l’Opera*, and the next day, Monday, at the opening of the Exchange, 104 francs were freely given for 5 per cents. It was of course a natural opinion, that the retirement of Chateaubriand would not militate against the permanence of de Villèle’s ministry, and the opinion was a correct one. But for the business world the consequence was immense losses for all the direct part-takers in the conversion, and for all the first speculators, among whom I, unfortunately, was one, and that for no small amount. The 5 per cents ran down to 98 francs, and remained fixed at that price for a long time. As people had freely purchased in behalf of the conversion, it became necessary to turn the purchases made on time into money again. Of the three chiefs of the coalition, Messrs. Baring and Lafitte suffered most, because of the immense expense caused by the collection of the thousand millions. But the Rothschilds were splendidly compensated by the sales of the 3 per cents, at 81 and 82, and by the sale, at the same time, of a great quantity of 5 per cents, at 104, 105, and 106. As the 3 per cents had just been called into ex-

istence they had nothing to furnish, and they could replace the 5 per cents sold at 98 francs. This plan of M. Rothschild was not imparted to the other two who were interested in the conversion, as is always required by the common understanding of a common participation in loss and gain—the two had been outflanked. The unconquerable aversion which the chief of the Hope house had long felt, to all business connexion with the Rothschilds, was the cause of the Amsterdam firms having no part in the projected conversion, and consequently none in the losses. In the same way the house of Hottinguer & Co., by advice of M. Labouchère, had refused any participation in the matter.

In the course of the summer of 1824, I received several visits from General La Fayette, whom I had slightly known some years before. His possession of certain lands in the state of Louisiana, in the district known as *Pointe Coupee*, had given rise to this acquaintance. At his liberation from his long imprisonment at Olmutz, the general's circumstances were so narrow, that old Sir Francis Baring (father, as already said, of Alexander Baring) had, of his own free will and out of personal esteem for the nobleman, sent him the important sum of £5,000. The repayment of this was hindered for several years, and finally (after the death of Sir Francis) it was agreed that the Barings should take, as equivalent for this not unimportant sum, some of the Louisiana lands, at the disproportionately high, purely imaginary price of eleven dollars per acre. The supervision of this purchase and the payment of the yearly land tax upon it, were committed to me by Messrs. Baring, at the time of the establishment of my house in New Orleans. Soon after this arrangement—which was made purely for the convenience of one party—General Lafayette found opportunity to sell at the same enormous price, as *speculation price*, another large tract of these lands, to the English baronet Sir Jos. Coghill, and to realize the money. The affair was closed in the most perfectly good faith by the general, who really believed that he was only getting the worth of his lands; and that it was no bad trade, but a genuinely good speculation, to buy them at the same price that so eminent and far-seeing a firm as the Barings had been willing to pay. On closer examination, instituted by

Sir Joshua, it was shown under how great an error he had lain. He complained to the Barings, in London, although he had nothing to do with them. He complained to the general, in Paris, and the latter considered it important to get more correct information about these lands from me. Naturally enough, I could give him as little information as comfort for the honest patience with which he bore this unfortunate state of things. The general was in every sense of the word an honorable man. But a second difficulty lay heavy upon his heart, during the frequent visits that he made to me. So many invitations had come to him from the United States, once more to visit that land, which had to thank his youthful arms for part of its freedom. Congress had instructed the president to notify him officially, their readiness to receive, as well as their power would admit, and to keep a frigate in readiness for him; he had received from all sides proofs of esteem and affection in such numbers, that he had finally determined, in spite of his advanced age, to undertake the voyage. One difficulty, however, must first be removed. He had no money. "I have here in Paris," said the general to me, "debts to the amount of 100,000 francs, which must be paid before I dare go to another quarter of the world. I could procure the money here if I would give a mortgage upon my estate, Lagrange, but it is the heritage of my children—it belonged to my wife, and now is theirs; and although they are all willing to resign, to help me in my embarrassments, I cannot accept it—I will not disturb it." The general then asked me to sound Mr. Baring, as to whether he would follow the example of his father, and advance an hundred thousand francs. I promised to do so, but at the same time told La Fayette that I doubted the result. The old advance was stuck into useless lands, and I feared that a second experiment would not be to the taste of the sons. Such was literally the case. "No, no," said Alexander Baring; "we are not quite clear of an old scrape, and cannot plump into a fresh one." The general appeared so sad when I told him of this, and he interested me so much, as he did every one who knew him well, that I bade him be of good courage; and promised to visit and inquire among such Americans as were living in independent circumstances in Paris, at the



time, and see what could be done with them. And first I went to our ambassador, James Brown, a worthy man, with whom I had become acquainted in Louisiana, and whose esteem and good will I dared flatter myself to possess. Cool and serious as this gentleman was in all his dealings, yet he took hold of this affair right heartily, and with a fire which much encouraged me. He promised to go to work, and pledged himself to furnish one quarter of the sum, and to induce others to follow his example. In fact, two persons at once joined him, naturalized Americans, who had returned from the United States, with abundant means, and now lived in Paris—a Hollander by the name of Jacob Gerhard Kock, from Amsterdam, and a Savoyard (lately deceased), M. Jean François Girod. In what manner the required sum was finally made up I have never learned, but the general himself informed me in a friendly note that the goal of his desires was attained. His note inclosed the request to visit him in the course of the week, that he might introduce me to a couple of English ladies, living in the house with him and under his protection, who expected to visit the United States, and desired to confer with me about some pecuniary difficulties. These two ladies were the authoress, Miss Fanny Wright, afterwards so well known for her eccentricities, and her sister. They desired to make over to me the sum of 120,000 francs, then in the hands of the banker Lafitte, that I might invest this capital in Louisiana, without losing the interest in the meantime; and with power to use the same in the meanwhile, if circumstances should render it necessary. This little negotiation was soon arranged, and when the ladies visited Louisiana, eighteen months later, they received their money back. The general spoke and wrote English perfectly well, yet in speaking he had a very broad accent. In writing, nothing betrayed him but the form of the letters and the hand. As a proof of this, you have here literally a letter which he wrote me on Miss Wright's affairs.

*Friday Evening.*

MY DEAR SIR—

I have received a note from Mr. Barnes, Consul of the U. S., informing me that he has to-morrow, at one o'clock, a Committee

from the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, which takes up the greater part of his time, and that Monday he will be ready to receive Mr. Nolte and myself. As I had not asked a positive appointment for us, but only announced my visit for this morning or the day after, I suppose it alludes to some application from you.

My young friends have left Paris, with a deep feeling of gratitude for your kind attentions in their behalf. I very heartily join in the sentiment, and am charged by them to make an inquiry, to which you will be pleased to give an answer, not losing sight of our inexperience in those matters, and the possibility of our making, very innocently, an improper demand.

You have been so kind as to give them the benefit of your arrangement with Mr. Hottinguer, so far as respects the money destined to the Louisiana State Bank. Could the same interest be extended to about twenty thousand francs remaining in the hands of Mr. Lafitte, if transferred to Mr. Hottinguer. Miss Wright left with me a letter to that purpose, in case I was encouraged to propose the arrangement. I waited upon you, after I had paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Baring; you was not at home; to-day I have been detained by cold and hoarseness, and hope the pleasure to find you to-morrow at an early hour; but as I have an opportunity to write to my friend, I thought I might anticipate the query at the same time that I gave the answer of the Consul.

Receive, dear sir, my best thanks, and most sincere regard.

LAFAYETTE.

Two weeks later the general, accompanied by his son, George Washington Lafayette, and his secretary, M. Levasseur, went to Havre, where he embarked on the 13th of July, in the regular packet *Cadmus*, for New York. Here he happily arrived after a short voyage, on the 16th of August. The somewhat imperfectly edited memoirs of the general, which appeared after his death, and other cotemporaneous writings, describe in detail the extraordinary reception that awaited him there. The enthusiasm which welcomed him, found an echo throughout the entire land.

In every State of the Union, (the original thirteen which composed it, after the war of Independence, as well as those which had been afterwards admitted,) gathered young and old together to greet and honor worthily the man who, sprung from the old French noblesse, in the bloom of youth, the darling of the court, had carried over the mighty ocean his strength, his ability, and a great part of his fortune to fight for the young Republic; had been Washington's comrade, friend, and first aid-de-camp, and was now the only living warrior of that time. A period of more than forty years had rolled away since the general had left the land for which he fought; the new generation which did not know him, regarded him in the light of a saint, and the old who remained, were so scattered that only here and there came one who could take the stranger by the hand and bid him welcome.

The chronologic sequence of my narrative now obliges me here to break off until I can again refer to the man whom I knew well, and whose friendship I had won. I return now to my two athletes, Villèle and Chateaubriand; the latter of whom I left as victor in the Chamber of Peers, but as a sorely wounded member of the Ministry, the doors of which were closed against him. He was dismissed on Sunday. I have shown how the next day, Monday, the whole exchange knew of the dismissal of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and saw there a proof of the unshaken power of the Marquis de Villèle, and the price of the stocks rose to 102 and 102½. Shortly before exchange hours I received a visit from my friend Francis Baring, to whom I had made no secret of my great losses in the 5 per cents. He came to advise me to let my stock go the next day. He had resolved, he said, to let it and his own—that is, what he had bought for his own account—go, if he could only do it without harm. “Mine,” I said, “would only cost me the brokerage.” “Ei,” he said; “that I could not offer,” and then he continued, “that it only came now to the difference of brokerage.” “Ah,” thought I to myself, “there is no danger here of any great fall;” and so I took the affair tolerably cool and instructed my exchange agent, D. Maurency, to sell mine at a certain price which would not be strictly kept to, however. The stock which at the opening of the exchange became saleable at



102½ and 102, went the same day back to 98, and so remained for some weeks. I now suffered a very important loss. M. Maurency had considered himself authorized to throw away my stock for the low price of 98 without any commission from me, without any preceding advice, because I had no provision for the stock bought on time. It is well known that in stocks, all purchasers on time are unlawful and cannot be sued on. So that I had no help, and was obliged to acknowledge to myself that I had neglected the means of remedying my evident loss. For I should have taken the object of Baring's visit for what it was, namely, to spare me a small loss, as it must have been a great loss which he feared. But then, why make the remark that he could not spare the brokerage. He wished in the first place, to give me a proof of his good will towards me; but at the same time he would have engaged me to concur in the sale of his own stock, which might have pressed the current of prices and so have brought down the stock. From the knowledge which I possessed of his custom of wishing to unite the most heterogeneous points, even when such union must be excessively difficult, I ought not to have overlooked this, but I could scarcely harbor such a suspicion against a friend. The offered advice was in open contradiction to itself. I had, as already remarked, treated the affair with levity; but in all matters of business, a merchant should never neglect to study and examine diligently all circumstances connected nearly, or distantly with the subject. Human foresight reaches seldom far enough to embrace all the circumstances of a case, and is unable to dispense with the greatest watchfulness; and I failed in this case, because I had neglected to be vigilant.

To this extended and ready vigilance, over all possible results connected with, or growing out of his projects and undertakings, belong the most important exigencies of the speculative merchant, by which term, I do not understand the ordinary speculator, but the man who feels himself obliged to stand out in the broad daylight, and amid his fellow-citizens, and in the sight of the whole world, to win for himself the rank that insures to him the reward of his struggles. What is usually understood by the word merchant, is simply the factor of sales and purchases. This man, no

matter how extended his trade, remains, what in the mercantile categories of South Germany, particularly in Austria, is called a wholesale tradesman—he is but a tradesman, and not a merchant in the true spirit of that word. It is the speculative spirit alone which marks the real merchant. And the use of this spirit, when kept subordinate to his actual clearly known means, and requires from him a prevision and observation of all possible results that may occur, is what procures for him a character for prudence. And yet how often does accident, by an unusual, hidden and suddenly self-created train of circumstances change the results of the wisest combination. Stock on hand, importations, supply;—these are usually the main points of most speculations in trade to which miscalculations have often given rise in corn and cotton, which latter occupied me daily and almost hourly. The reader will see something about it in most of the following pages, but I must be allowed to record one example here. In one of the years when British consumption of cotton appeared to be on the progressive decline, it yet on one occasion appeared to revive and exhibit fresh vigor. People remarked important consignments of raw material to the consumers, the spinners, and judged therefrom that they had not only exhausted their regular supply, but that they would infallibly come into the market again as purchasers. The expression “delivered to the trade,” although it announced no positive sales, still suggested the momentarily existing and pressing need of the material. And what did I discover in the course of the same year. The head of the great spinning and manufacturing establishment of Messrs. Strutt, in Derbyshire, who never required less annually than 10,000 bales of cotton, had convinced themselves that the pressure on the raw material had reached the lowest degree, and that the prices would not probably, for many a year, be so low as at present. They therefore, commanded all that they would need for three years at once, 30,000 bales, which they purchased quietly, by means of their brokers, who did not fail in their weekly circulars to set this quantity down as “delivered to the trade.” The reader will easily understand that the purchase by a single house of such a quantity of cotton did not exhibit the true amount of a year’s

necessities; for it might have represented ten houses, of which, each had purchased 3,000 bales. Nevertheless, this single example had its influence. A regular demand was produced, which also, was not caused by a real present need of material, but was a mere delusion, of which, even many of the speculators were victims. The restoration of the whole mass of material owed its existence to a delusion. The same errors never have such powerful and stirring influence as in attempts to monopolize a branch of commerce. Thus in the whole course of my mercantile struggles, no single example of a successful speculation of this kind, that is, where a great permanent revolution of the market was aimed at, exists. A wholesale monopolizing purchase of an article is often destroyed by an attempt to sell it at paying prices. The difference between the supply and the actual regular consumption, can in these peaceful times, be easily discovered; and therefore, one ordinarily resists, until forced by necessity, to pay a compulsory speculation price. A man seldom forgives himself for a lack of foresight which another has made use of, and still less does he like to pay away money that such foresight might have saved him. Sales on delivery at unusually high prices seldom fail, if the speculator only choose his time right, and take his measures accordingly.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE BUSINESS CRISIS OF 1825-6.—LAFAYETTE IN NEW ORLEANS.

The Liverpool Cotton Market at the close of the year 1824—Sudden rise of prices, in January, 1825—Manceuvres of the Liverpool houses to keep up the prices—Well calculated course of the Scotch house of J. & A. Denistoun & Co.—The speculation mania in New Orleans—Arrival of General Lafayette in New Orleans—His reception—Anecdotes of him—I accompany him, in the name of the city, as one of its deputies, to Natchez—State of the Cotton Market when I arrived in Natchez.

At my arrival in Liverpool, where I went on my return to the United States, I found, as is usual in the beginning of autumn, that the whole Exchange was engrossed in calculations as to the probable position of the cotton market at the end of the year. Men would not listen to the news that all the supply in the Atlantic ports was exhausted, but calculated that the shipments of what remained of the old crop, and the abundant produce of the new, from October 1, to the end of the year, would reach 250,000 bales. From that came the calculation, that the stock of American cotton in England, proportioned to the then consumption, would be about 200,000 bales. My simple question, "What will be the consequence if the supply do not transcend 100,000 bales," was met by the reply, that a sudden rise of a penny a pound, or fifteen to twenty per cent., was the universal conviction.

I reached New York about the middle of November. With the foregoing information about the Southern harbors, and a list of all exportations which had taken place meantime, I perceived that, instead of an export of 150,000 bales of the old crop, scarce 30,000 had been sent off in the months of October and November, and that the month of December could not and would not furnish 20,000

bales. I hastened to New Orleans. Here I found two ships in the hands of my house, which we were to load for the account of a Quaker firm in New York. This was done at the prices, 11, 11½, and 12 cents. We also sent off a cargo of 900 bales on our own account. The prices had no direct tendency towards a rise, but the expectation of such a rise was evident, by the willingness with which the prices demanded were paid. I therefore determined to buy 1000 bales more on my own account, and to keep it ready. The prices raised but little, and we sent off another cargo on our own account.

I supposed that about the middle of February we would receive information about the stock of American cotton on hand in Liverpool, at the close of the year, if the regular packets between Liverpool and New York should make short passages; and I possessed, in advance, the certainty which could not be had in Liverpool, that it could not possibly surpass 100,000 bales. Already, on the 12th of February, my fears were aroused, lest the news of the scanty condition of the Liverpool market, at the close of the year, should find us careless and unprepared. Driven, then, by my own impatience, I sent our clerk, Ferriday, who was accustomed to make all our purchases with zealous diligence, to the suburbs, where the cotton market is always held, and instructed him not to return with empty hands, nor without having purchased at least 1500 bales for our house, at the current prices. My last words were, "Do not stand upon trifles, but buy." He fulfilled the commission, and bought 2000 bales.

Two days later, on February 14th, at noon, a neat, fast sailing schooner brought me, from the two Quaker houses, Francis Thompson & Nephews, and Jeremiah Thompson, in New York, the news of the close of the Liverpool market, on December 21, 1824, and the commission to purchase 10,000 bales for them and for Cropper, Benson & Co., of Liverpool, at the current prices. The stock of American cotton in Liverpool was exactly as I had anticipated—there were but 100,000 bales there—and the consequence of so unusually small a supply was precisely the fulfilment of the knowing people's prophecies. There was a sudden rise of a penny. The first re-action on our market at New Orleans was

a rise of three cents. Whosoever was engaged in the cotton trade and was a cotemporary of that remarkable year, 1825, will remember the frenzy that seized all speculators, first in England, and then, by infallible consequence, in the United States. In spite of the disposition of my adopted countrymen to take fire easily, the rise in American shipment prices did not move so rapidly as the spirit of speculation in England, for there the prices rose 110 per cent., but in the United States not more than 85. We turned most of our own local stock into money, gaining thereby \$60,000; and from the first cargo sent to Liverpool, in the brig Ocean, Captain Bond, 950 bales, we received a return from the house of Cropper, with the unexampled gain of £11,460. Besides a share in the cargoes shipped in union with the Messrs. Cropper and Thompson, we had two others, which arrived in Liverpool about ten days after the 950 bales, but costing about ten per cent. more, on which the Croppers could have gained quite as much, had they chosen. They, however, thought it judicious to throw away the enormous profit of eighty per cent., because they would not, by "ill-timed sales," interfere with their own pre-conceived views of the future of the cotton market, nor stop the revolution; but the consumers, the spinners, would force them to withdraw their extortionate claims. With very few exceptions, all the cotton traders became quiet participants in this coalition. The higher the article rose, so rose also the resolution of the spinners not to pay the unheard of price which was demanded—they scarcely bought at all. But the leaders of the countless troop of speculators, Messrs. Cropper, Benson & Co., with their fellow-quakers, Rathbone, Hodgson & Co., in union with the brokers, Cooke & Comer, were enabled to avoid, what under usual circumstances would have been the inevitable result of this opposition, to wit, a fall of prices, by always permitting underhand sales, or by supporting new buyers, who found means to come into the market, who in the end only gave out their own names. The Manchester spinners, though pressed by necessity to accept the high prices, had as yet bought as little as possible, and finally came to the resolution not to buy at all. The whole month of May passed over without one single important sale having taken place.



The letters of the Quaker firms to their correspondents contained the words, "Nothing can equal the firmness of our holders." The words should have been, "Nothing can equal the firmness of our holders but the unbending obstinacy of the consumers, to economize their stock as much as possible, and to buy no more than positive necessity demands." The ground upon which the superstructure of this mighty speculation rested was hollow, and must inevitably give way, and carry the whole fabric with it to destruction. The expectation that the spinners, at the sight of the rising prices, must necessarily provide themselves with the raw material at any cost, was the groundwork, and the belief in the insufficiency of the expected importations was the foundation, of the whole speculation. Both of these calculations were ill made. The spinners knew too well that they could find no buyers for their fabrics at prices commensurate with those of the raw material, and that, consequently, they could only manufacture at great loss to themselves; and the importers, allured from all the markets and corners of the earth, surpassed all and every calculation that had been made. From Brazil, of which the exportable cotton crop for five years had been reckoned at 175,000 bales, came suddenly just twice that quantity, 350,000 bales. Stiff-necked, well-to-do planters had annually kept back a portion of their crops when the prices did not suit them. This no one knew; and it may serve as a universal proof of the assertion that, in wholesale speculations, particularly in those which take their rise in a view to monopoly, that human foresight is never sufficiently great to calculate upon all the circumstances which may belong to, or result from its actions.

The month of May, with its enforced activity in the cotton-market, was scarcely gone, when the Scottish house of James and Alexander Denistoun & Co., of Glasgow, received in Liverpool 5000 bales, from New Orleans; and under the direction of the clever head of the firm, Mr. James Denistoun, then president of the bank of Scotland, in Glasgow, determined to offer the whole importation for sale. The Quaker confederation implored them to keep up the price, which was for Georgia cotton,  $15\frac{3}{4}$  to 16 pence, but in vain. The 5000 bales were sold at from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{3}{4}$

below the standing price ; and when it is recollected that a fall of one farthing, under the ordinary price of cotton, will prevent any one in Liverpool from buying, it will easily be understood that a sale at from 15 to 16 per cent. under current prices offered a clear proof that all the calculations were shown to be false, that the elasticity of the market had been unnaturally tried, and that spinners had perfectly understood the whole combination. The determination of the Scottish firm arose from the simple observation of the fact that the extraordinary importations allured by the high prices had already, in the beginning of June, collected more cotton in Great Britain than the greatest possible consumption of the whole year could demand ; and hence, that every pound of the raw material, which might arrive from that time forth, must be seen by every clear-sighted importer to be simply superfluous, and to add to an already unnecessary stock. In another five months the new American crop would be ready, and it was promising to be very abundant.

In the beginning of April, precisely when the wildest spirit of speculation was at work in New Orleans, and was occupying our almost entire attention, came General Lafayette, an arrival which alone could have created a diversion. Although in the whole population of the city and its environs not one comrade in the war of independence, nor even one personal acquaintance, except myself, was there to greet him, still the enthusiasm with which he had been received everywhere was intense in Louisiana, from the fact of most of the inhabitants being of French extraction ; and men were more anxious to venerate the historic importance of the actor in the French revolution, than of the then young but now gray-haired hero of the American. The general had arrived, before the opening of the Congress of December 8, 1824, in Washington, and had employed the intervening time in visiting the states of New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. He passed through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, on his way to Washington, and it was there that the then speaker of the House, the late Henry Clay, introduced him, on the 10th December, into the Hall of Representatives, and presented him to both houses therein assembled. The roomy and richly-decorated

hall held on this occasion 2,000 persons, with all the foreign ministers, except the French ambassador of the Bourbons. The Marquis afterwards told me, that although he had witnessed very many assemblies in his own country, never had he received such an impression as from this one; and that he had never been so thoroughly moved by the eloquence of any man, not even by that of Mirabeau, as by the clear and spirited ring of the voice of Henry Clay. "It was," he said, "the voice of a nation, making itself heard by the mouth of a great man." The whole house, as if stricken by the wand of an enchanter, had risen to their feet as Clay entered, leading Lafayette by the hand. They sat down at the conclusion of the welcoming speech, but arose again at the first signs of a reply. They expected him to take his spectacles and a written answer from his pocket; but after a moment's pause he spoke, extemporaneously, and in English. To Clay's remark, that he was the witness of his own future, he replied, that when he there found, in the sons of his former and now departed friends, the same spirit for the general weal, as well as the same personal friendship for him, no future spread itself before him. The Congress, as is well known, voted to the general, as a testimonial of the national gratitude, \$200,000, and 200,000 acres of land, which the general chose in the newly-received state of Florida, which had just been purchased from Spain, it having been allowed him, as a condition of the present, to choose from any unoccupied public lands in the United States. After this present, the general resolved to visit all the States, if only for a couple of days, which, in the session of Congress, had voted for the present. Therefore he left Washington, and passed through Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, to Mobile, where he found a deputation from New Orleans, headed by the governor, who had come to welcome him, and conduct him to their city. As I learned from the governor, his first question about New Orleans was whether I were there, and he seemed pleased at receiving an affirmative answer. The legislature of the state had arranged his reception with the common council of the city. The residence of the common council, the *Mayory*, was entirely refitted, admirably adorned, and newly and luxuriously furnished. A table, with



thirty covers, was set every day during the general's stay, in order that he might become acquainted with the principal inhabitants and planters. I will not speak of other festivities—balls, theatres, &c. Finally, one of the best steamers was procured, and kept ready for a visit to Natchez and the state of Mississippi, with a deputation, consisting of the governor, a member of the legislature, a member of the common council, and a delegate from all the most important classes in the country—planters, lawyers, merchants, &c.—chosen by the general himself. When he looked over the list, and came to the names of the merchants, he designated me as the person who, as an old acquaintance, would be most agreeable to him. By his wish I visited him every morning after breakfast, on which occasions he questioned me freely about men and things in Louisiana. One morning he acknowledged to me that his purse was but meagrely furnished. "Certainly," he said, "Congress has granted me money enough, but I have not as yet received one cent of the \$200,000, because the treasury was not at the moment prepared to pay it; therefore, I am in need of money; can you give it me?" My answer may be divined. I placed my cash-box at his disposal; but he only wanted \$1200, which I brought him the same day. I asked for no receipt, but begged him merely, when he should return to the North, and visit Boston, at his convenience to give the sum to my friend there, Mr. John Richards. The general insisted on giving a receipt, and put one into my hand the next morning, which I have retained, although the debt has been paid.

The voyage to Natchez gave me better opportunities of seeing the general, and of enjoying his conversation, than would otherwise have been possible. The whole of the great cabin of the steamboat was for the general's convenience. Above this, on the deck, was erected a large convenient saloon, wherein the eating was carried on, and where people passed the time as well as they could. In it were sofas, play-tables, cards, and books. The governor of Louisiana, by name Johnson—a most ordinary kind of man, ill-instructed, and of most unpolished manners, in many respects a true child of nature—sat on the general's right hand. The seat at the left hand was reserved for me; and at breakfast

the general was wont to say, "If you have anything to talk about, let us go down to my room and talk." Such invitations were the more welcome because I could not accept them as often as I wished, and I had avoided them, as far as the resting-points of the trip were concerned. As the dwellers on the banks of the Mississippi had expected the arrival and voyage of the general, wherever the steamer that carried the nation's guest was recognized, by the numerous decorative flags, they hastened, so soon as it was seen in the distance, to assemble in some house, and to make the welkin ring with their shouts of welcome. Where the houses were numerous, or in the immediate neighborhood of a village—like Baton Rouge, for instance—the boat would stop, and the general would receive the deputations that came on board to greet him, or the single personages who desired to be presented to him. The deputations usually came with their speaker at the head. Of course, in most instances, the speaker was more occupied in exhibiting his cleverness and oratorical talent, than with the object of his mission, or a desire to give pleasure to the hearer. And the good general had no remedy for this evil, but was compelled to listen attentively to the longest, stupidest, wordiest discourses possible. I never saw a mark of impatience upon his countenance. So soon as the infliction was brought to an end, he always had ready a few suitable and flattering words. The ease with which he performed this task greatly astonished me. I could not refrain one day from asking him how he managed always to reply to the most silly and idealess speeches. "My friend," he answered, "it is not hard. I listen with great attention until the speaker drops something that pleases me, or that gives opportunity for a repartee, and then I think about my reply, and arrange it; but of all the rest I do not hear a syllable—it all blows over me."

But on other less important occasions his readiness and power in answering was really remarkable. At Baton Rouge, two young men were presented to him. The inevitable hand-shaking was the usual prelude to a short dialogue; but the young men stood mute before the general and gazed at him silently. At length he asked one of them, "Are you married?" "Yes, sir," was the

answer. "Happy man," quoth the general. He then put the same question to the other, "and you, sir, are you married?" "No, sir," was the answer; "I am a bachelor." "Lucky dog!" said the general. In these words which fell from the general, and which I cannot render happily into German, both received, married man and bachelor, a witty compliment on his social position.

On my first visit to the general's room, I begged permission to be allowed to address any questions that might come into my head, to him who had a world-full of experience. The occurrences which took place in the first days of the French Revolution, the scenes at Versailles, the leading out of the unfortunate queen, Marie Antoinette, upon the balcony of the palace, where he had kissed her hand, as a proof of peace and good understanding between them, before the thousands who were gathered in the palace court and in the Avenue de Versailles, and many of whom had come there with ill-intent; the joy that followed his assurance to the people that the royal family would go to Paris. To hear all these circumstances described by his own lips, and with the greatest modesty and simpleness, was a genuine treat to me. Great as was his modesty, however, he could not conceal the pleasure caused by these recollections of his earlier popularity and influence. Popularity was the god that ruled him, and to which on no occasion of his life had he ever refused his service. I had already seen this during his stay in New Orleans, and on our trip up the Mississippi, and some years later during the July revolution in Paris, these convictions increased. To be the idol of the people was the deepest desire of his heart, and the fulfillment of this desire he could only attain to in a republic. That he knew—but I would do him injustice were I to ascribe his republicanism to this source alone. He was a republican by conviction, and from the centre of his soul out. The lessons that he had received at the side of Washington, and under the victorious banners of the Union, he faithfully followed throughout his life, and the idea that this form of government and none other could make his country happy was guarded in his breast as a holy thing. In this he found the only panacea for the cure of the many evils



under which France was suffering. On one of our morning conversations he spoke about the Bourbons, on whose political and moral unimportance he looked with pity, and from whom he wished that France were freed so soon as possible. The well-known remark of Talleyrand, that they had forgotten nothing, and learned nothing, he thought described them better than all that other men had said about them. "France," said Lafayette, "cannot be happy under the Bourbons, and we must send them adrift. It would have been done ere now but for Lafitte." "Indeed," I said; "how so?" "It is not too long ago," said the general, "for you to remember that two regiments of guards, ordered to Spain, under the Duc d'Angouleme, stopped at Toulouse, and began to show symptoms of revolt. The matter was quieted however, and kept as still as possible. But all was ready, as I know by my private correspondence with some of the officers—all that was wanting to make a revolution succeed was money. I went to Lafitte; but he was full of doubts, and dilly-dallied with the matter. Then I offered to do it without his help; said I, 'On the first interview that you and I have without witnesses, just put a million of francs in bank notes on the mantelpiece, which I will pocket, unseen by you. Then leave the rest with me.' Lafitte still fought shy of it, deliberated, hesitated, and at last declared that he would have nothing at all to do with it."

I could not conceal my surprise, and said, "Had I heard this story from any lips but yours, general, I could not have believed a word of it." Lafayette merely answered, "*C'était pourtant ainsi.*" This may serve as a testimony how hotly the revolutionary fire still burned in the old man, in spite of all his exterior coolness and repose.

After our arrival at Natchez, where we took part in the general festivities held for a couple of days in honor of Lafayette, we took our leave of him, and returned to New Orleans. There I found the speculation fever still raging. I had instructed my two partners not to buy during my absence one single pound of cotton, and had received their promise to that effect. I was therefore, the more indignant that my good but feeble friend Hollander, had allowed himself to be talked over by my youngest

partner, an Englishman, named Parker, into buying at seventeen cents, 800 bales, the pick of the crop, which was all in the hands of Reynolds, Byrne & Co. The vertigo of speculation still endured, and had attacked no man more fiercely than the seller, Byrne. He mourned that he had sold so much, and especially bewailed their sale to us. News from Liverpool gave still a greater rise in prices,—and in New Orleans, they mounted to twenty-one and twenty-two cents. I met my hot-headed Byrne in the street, who again began to lament over his 600 bales; that they were all of the best sort of which there was, and promised to be very little. “You can have them back again for twenty-two cents,” said I. “Done,” cried Byrne, hastily. The trade, was regularly closed, and the sum of \$16,000 gained by the operation.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS OF 1825-26.

Extensive purchase of cotton for the house of Crowder, Clough & Co., in Liverpool—Failure of that house, and the establishments connected with it in New York and Charleston—Influence of the failure on the position of my house—Unavoidable suspension of payments—The creditors unanimously appoint me *Syndic of the Mass*—Transferral of my power of attorney to my junior partners—My voyage to England—Reception at Barings'—The true position of affairs, in respect to the Crowder assets—First success in the suit brought against the administrators of the Crowder assets—Rencontre in the Birmingham post-coach, on my way back to London—A letter from Mr. Alexander Baring—Consequences of the rencontre in the post-coach—Favorable issue of my heavy suit in the Court of Chancery—Lord Eldon; the last decision but one rendered by him before leaving the Ministry.

I FANCIED now that I might calmly wait for the next cotton crop, and leave trade for awhile alone; but as the reader will soon see, Heaven willed it otherwise. I wished to send to Europe my eldest partner, Mr. Parker, who did not know my correspondents, in order to give him a chance of seeing matters on the other side; above all, that he might turn into money any stock of cotton belonging to us there and still unsold. He arrived happily, and in the idle month of May, found the cotton market unfluctuating, and the views of our friends unchanged. It was not easy to take the step which the Denistouns had taken soon after his arrival. For in the first place, the question was not simply about the stock belonging to us in Liverpool, but of the rest which we owned in connection with the house of Cropper, and with Thompson, who rendered a sale impossible, for they had the upper hand, and their politics, that is, their views of the future of the cotton market, as also of the judiciousness of the measures which were to aid the



accomplishment of those views, were directly opposed to a forced sale of our share—so then nothing happened.

In the meanwhile, the state of affairs in New Orleans had taken another aspect. A certain Mr. Lazarus came in a schooner, dispatched from Charleston to New Orleans; he had made purchases there for the Croppers, Thompsons, and others, and he brought me the newest and most important news from Liverpool, as well as a letter from Mr. Clough, partner of the Liverpool house of Crowder, Clough & Co. This house, which I knew very well, was not of the first class, but was at the head of the second class, and possessed very good credit. Mr. Lazarus proved to me that this firm had deserved well in the course of the current year, by the compared lists of shipments made from Charleston for their own account, and of the sales which had taken place, and which had more or less to do with the results of our shipment by the brig Ocean. The object of Mr. Clough, and, with the house of Weyman, of Charleston, and in New York, connected with him, was to lay hands firmly and early upon a large amount of cotton, in expectation of an endurance of the high prices, in order to turn it into money again, and win a large profit by the operation, so as to ship the purchase to Liverpool, if matters there should remain as they then were. This information was accompanied by a letter of credit upon us for \$50,000, from Leroy, Bayard & Co., of New York, whose credit stood very high with us, and another for the same sum from the Weymans. The first of these letters of credit was positive; the other was not to be regarded as unqualified, but was to be governed by the particular circumstances of the cotton market, and also by the condition that all purchases should remain in our hands, and be under our direction; and that, until all the liabilities of the Liverpool house should be settled, a positive value could not be given to it. I turned the affair over, and found that a purchase of 6,000 bales, at the current price of 21 cents, would need a capital of half a million dollars; and that a commission of 5 per cent., according to the New Orleans tariff, would bring in \$25,000. This, with the two credits, each of \$50,000, gave \$125,000: so that a quarter of the whole commissions on the cotton to be purchased, and also 25 per cent. of the

total purchases to remain in our possession, might be lost, before a single dollar of our own capital should be risked. A fluctuation in prices must take place before the enormous rise could take any definite character, and before the real state of things could be determined; but a sudden fall of prices was not to be expected, and, least of all, could the possibility of a fall of 25 per cent. enter the mind of any man. After these considerations had been well weighed, the importance of the capital to be laid out must be next thought of. Half the commission would be at once paid by the wholesale purchase on our part; and for the other half, and according to circumstances, their acceptances would be given for two and three months from date. These acceptances were punctually redeemed as they fell due, and the bank was never requested to renew them, as was usual in all other houses established in New Orleans, which in this way procure credit from the bank, from the beginning to the end of the year, and thus make their own credit permanent. Never had one of our acceptances been refused at the bank; the directors knew too well the source from which they came, and that our motive was to gain time for our not always negotiable paper, and not the concealment of a weakness, nor a want of capital. I said above, that a quarter of the commissions would be paid by the above-named purchase, and that as for the other three-quarters, time must be given for the negotiation of our paper. The commission was quite too important for me to trust to hazard. I therefore felt the pulse of the directors of the three principal banks, and came to an understanding with them, that they should furnish the money, and discount our acceptances in the cotton market at the usual rate, and besides that they might be taken up when they fell due, by the payers, with new acceptances at two months. All this was arranged in one day. And now, if the purchases were to be made, no time was to be lost. Lazarus, who was introduced to me by the Croppers as an exceedingly honest, worthy man, had assured me that the next report from Charleston would infallibly bring me, from Clough and Weyman, further remittances or credits to lessen our outlay. So, perfectly satisfied, I went to work, and in the course of one morning purchased 6,000 bales of cotton. Lazarus swam in a

sea of delight until the first mail arrived from Charleston, without bringing us our promised remittances or letters. The second, the third, the fourth came in, all without letters. Then I began to feel a misgiving that I had fallen into a trap, and that Lazarus had calculated beforehand how he might best lead me, and get into my confidence. He stood before me utterly helpless, and seemed very much at a loss what to do with his unpromising speculation. A well-considered regular plan did not appear to have been settled upon between him and his confederates. At last I determined to send him to New York. "There is nothing left for you," I said, "but to reach New York as soon as possible, and thence to help us with remittances."

I did not now delay to send the whole quantity of cotton purchased to Liverpool, to Baring, Brothers & Co., who had attended to the insurance with our drafts on the Liverpool house of Clough, Crowder & Co., with the instructions, that so soon as these drafts were accepted and *paid*, or if the assurance, which the acceptance offered, were satisfactory to them, to deliver the bills of lading. The greater part of the amount of the drafts were taken again from the Barings, and negotiated at the Branch Bank of the United States.

Soon after, my good friend Hill, head of the Denistoun firm in New Orleans, received the news of the sale of the six thousand bales of which I have spoken. He showed me the original letter of his chief, old Mr. Denistoun, of Glasgow, which brought me to the conclusion that this time the Liverpool spirit of speculation was at an end, and that the article itself was on a slope, down which it must roll, like an avalanche, until it met with an obstacle that could arrest it. After the sale of Messrs. Denistoun, the price fell in July to 11, towards the end of the month to 9½ pence. In the beginning of August, the house of Crowder, Clough & Co., of Liverpool, declared itself insolvent; the Weymans, in New York and Charleston, followed, and towards the end of September the news of these sad events reached me, and caused me to foresee how, by the blow of an inexorable fate, the irremediable fall of my own house—for fourteen years so successfully conducted, that it was regarded as the first, not only in New Orleans but in



all the Southern States. It was a heartrending destruction of all that had made my life happy and gratified my ambition. I will not allow myself to say more than these few words about it. For those who feel in head and heart like me these lines will be enough; for the superficial reader, they are already too much.

To comprehend the results of this state of affairs, and to arrange our payments, was my next resolve; yet I held it my duty to notify those who had negotiated my acceptances, in consequence of my understanding with the bank, and those whose names were upon such as were negotiated with the Bank of the United States. These various houses would soon be informed by the bank that they must at once replace our now worthless signature by another; and they were so entirely unprepared, that they could find no other means than taking up the paper with ready money. They were thus placed in the mournful necessity to suspend their own payments, although perfectly solvent. They took counsel with each other, however, and determined very wisely to induce me to renew, from time to time, our acceptances, under the agreement I had made with the bank, until they should be in a condition to take up their notes and pay their liabilities. It was my duty to my hard-pressed friends and neighbors to give my assent to this plan, although these renewals would cost something like \$4000 for interest every sixty days; so I made the condition, that this money, which the mass could not use, but which for the present must injure their effects, must come from themselves and not from the mass. So, then, I remained from the end of August, for four and a half months, in the sad position of a man playing before the world the part of the man who has but hope to enable him to strive with the difficulties which besiege him, while in heart I had the conviction that all must be in vain. At last, in the middle of January, of the following year, 1826, my friends announced to me that they had completed their preparations, and had paid in their own paper to the bank. I then delayed no longer our declaration of insolvency, and handed our balance-sheet into court. This was done January 18, 1826. At the head of our foreign creditors were Cropper, Benson & Co., Liverpool, and Hottinguer & Co., in Paris. I had already informed them in October of the proba-

bly inevitable failure of our house. Both firms wrote comforting and trusting letters to me, saying that they desired me to manage their affairs, and sending me their full powers as creditors. All the creditors in New Orleans also, with the exception of one merciful lawyer, to whom a small sum was owed, named me syndic of the mass, who claimed \$1,200,000, with the right to associate both my partners with me, should the circumstances of the liquidation require it. This was naturally soon the case. The buyers of cotton, the endorsers of our paper, and finally Le Roy, Bayard & Co., had sent full powers to their English correspondents to seize the cotton sent to the Barings; and the misunderstandings which arose out of this had thrown the matter into the court of chancery—of which it was proverbially said, that if a man had a cause there, he must expect it to remain there at least half his life. The Messrs. Barings, who, by Mr. Holland's advice, kept themselves perfectly passive in the matter, would take no step without a positive order of the court, and to obtain this a perfect mass of points had first to be clearly settled, among parties who did not appear able to come to an understanding. It was a perfect labyrinth of difficulties, of which the clue, according to all appearance, would never be found. The issue of the affair depended entirely upon the result of the suit in chancery. It was not only a matter of the greatest importance, but even of positive necessity, to get a decision, which, according to English law, should give to every man his rights. The local liquidation of the debts was quite a simple affair. I came to the resolution of going to Europe, in order to bring my wits to bear upon the solution of the Gordian knot, into which the various embarrassments had tied themselves. My two partners were to take my place in New Orleans, and after having explained matters to them, I hastened to Europe. Above all, I instructed my partners not to sell, even for the most impatient creditors, our houses, stores, cotton-presses, etc., hastily, since they composed a very important portion of our effects. They were all situated in the finest part of the suburbs, and offered the apparent certainty, that, so soon as the approaching end of this crisis, which occupied all attention and made money very scarce, should arrive, their value, now a

mere nominal one, would be greatly increased. The absolute outlay for the grounds and buildings was over \$155,000, and figured for this amount on the balance-sheet. Their prospective value could not be calculated at the moment, but was indubitably greater than the sum named. The first and most important matter that I had at heart was, in all my directions to my partners, the interest of my creditors; and here I indulged a hope that Mr. Alexander Baring might be induced to come in among the buyers, and purchase this costly establishment at a fair price, in order to give me the management of it; and so secure to himself an important property, and to me a sufficiency for the rest of my life.

So soon as I had reached London, by the way of Havre, I called on the Barings, and was there received by Mr. Holland, an honest right-spirited man, but somewhat brusque and unpolished. "Mr. Nolte," said he; "your business is in chancery, and there it will stick. I'll give you ten years time to get it out of it." Dull comfort, that. They sent me then to their solicitor, Mr. Edward Lawford, who was also solicitor to the Havre East India Company, and one of the first in London, and he dismissed me to Mr. Low, the first chancery solicitor, for the Court of Chancery,—then under the Presidency of Lord Eldon,—furnishing a peculiar study of London legal science and customs. From neither of these gentlemen could I get any light. Under these circumstances I thought it advisable to go to Liverpool, there to learn, if possible, from the lips of the solicitor of the Crowder creditors, for what reasons, and on what grounds he had come to the absurd resolution to refuse the whole claim of my house, which was for no less a sum than £123,000, and to assert that it was a mere private claim upon Mr. Clough, whom we could bring to a reckoning, but that the firm had nothing to do with it. On my arrival in Liverpool, I made my intentions known to my friends there. They laughed, and told me that the solicitor would neither receive me nor hold any conversation with me. "Ah! why not?" I cried. "Because," was the answer; "legal etiquette forbids it. It is the custom here for an advocate never to see the opposer of his client, and to have nothing to do with any one but the latter." Now this was precisely against me. I wanted to hear with my own



ears and see with my own eyes, and not take the second-hand impressions of my solicitor. He, I said to my friends, would advance *his* views, while I wished to have my own, and to act for myself. At last I asked the name of the Crowder solicitor, and what manner of man he was. I learned that his name was Lace, that he was a very learned, well-informed man, and besides that, lawyer of my best friends in Liverpool, Thomas and Wm. Earle & Co., who had known me from childhood; of Cropper, Benson & Co., of Rathbone, Hodgson & Co., and others. Then, I begged these gentlemen, who knew me and my character so well, to pay a formal visit to Mr. Lace, and to give him the assurance of my name, that I would not misuse any information that he might deign to give me, and that I had no idea of sneaking into his confidence, in order so to undermine the position he had taken. Mr. Benson in particular, and Mr. Leathorne from the Earle house, were good enough to visit Mr. Lace for me, and procured for me permission to call on him. The interview took place. Lace was, as all my friends had said, a clever man; but his nature was certainly irritable and peevish. So, at least, I found him. After half an hour's debate, he declared to me that his views on the whole matter were settled, and not to be changed. I then proposed to him, to shorten the long course of the chancery process, to give the affair into the hands of three merchants, who should settle it by arbitration; and to show how thoroughly convinced I was of the excellence of our claim, I proposed to him to name all three. Only, I said, they must all be merchants of the first rank, and of the greatest respectability,—and from London, because in Liverpool everybody had more or less interest in the matter. “Mr. Nolte,” answered Mr. Lace, “if it come to an arbitration by merchants, there is not one in England who would not accept your views, and give the decision in your favor.” “And in spite of this conviction,” said I; “how can you justify your determination to let this drag on in chancery, and thus endeavor to take from me what every honest merchant in England would, according to your own conviction, give me.” “If you desire to know my grounds,” answered Mr. Lace; “I will tell you. I am the representative and counsellor of all the English creditors of the house.

Your claim alone, amounts to as much as those of all the others put together, and they will get a double dividend if I succeed in sending you back upon Clough, and getting your claim upon the house denied. That claim I never can admit unless compelled to do so by a decree from the Court of Chancery." "Mr. Lace," I said, "if these are your grounds you cannot be helped by delay, still less can delay be your object. Give me your word then, to bring the matter as soon as possible to an end, you and your London solicitor." He did as I requested, and gave me a line to his solicitors in London, Messrs. Roscoe, instructing them to aid me in all things that I desired, for the rapid progress of the affair, and which would not interfere with their own good rights. With this I went back to London.

I must not here omit a circumstance which was the source of some unpleasantness to me.

I took a place at 5 o'clock in the morning, in the Birmingham coach, the best conveyance then between Liverpool and London. It was a troubled, misty, unpleasant morning. In the corner of the coach opposite me, wrapped in his cloak, sat a gloomy looking person, besides myself, the only passenger. More than two hours elapsed before the spirit moved us to any conversation. At length my companion roused himself and brought forward the subject which always opens a conversation in England,—the weather,—“We have a very nasty disagreeable day before us, I fear,” he remarked. Whereupon I asked him if he were going all the way to London. “No, no,” he answered, “I will get out at a pottery near Wolverhampton, where I have to buy some hundred baskets of crockery for my ship, the Peter Ellis.” “In order to send it to New Orleans, I suppose,” said I. “Certainly,” he said; “but I beg your pardon, how did you know that?” “I did not know it,” I replied; “I only guessed it. I have seen the ship several times in New Orleans. She was consigned to my friends, Denistoun, Hill & Co.” “Oh, ho,” said he, “so you have been in New Orleans.” “Very often,” said I. “How is the credit of the firm,” was his next question. “Admirable,” said I; “Mr. Hill is a man much esteemed and beloved.” “So I have always thought,” said he. “Those gentleman,” I

continued, "very often have ships to their address : for instance, the Liverpool brig 'The Brothers,' the ship 'Mary Wood,' and others. The Liverpool ship 'Ottowa' was in other hands (namely, in ours), as well as many others." "You appear to know our vessels well," said he, "and also most of the English houses in New Orleans." "Oh, yes," I said; "I know nearly all the houses of any position there pretty well. "I am glad to hear it," said my companion, and then our dialogue continued. "Do you know Munro, Milne & Co?" "Very well. They are the established correspondents of James Finlay & Co., of Glasgow." "Do you know P. L. & Co.? How do they stand?" "So, so, no general credit." "Do you know G. F. & Co.?" "G. is a clever business man and F. is a windbag, who, however, has thrown into the firm a large capital, inherited from his aunt." "The devil," quoth my interlocutor; "you appear to know them all. You must have lived some years in New Orleans." "Yes, several." "Do you know Vincent Nolte?" "As well as he knows himself." "What sort of a man is he?" "Well," said I; "he has many friends, and perhaps, quite as many foes: take him all in all, however, I believe he is a good sort of a fellow, and with whom folks like to deal." "Yes," he said, "our captains like him very much. He was prompt and expeditious, and when he had freighted a vessel, the goods came down as fast as they could be received on board." "I believe," said I, "that this praise is not undeserved. It was always his custom to do quickly, whatever he undertook." Thereupon our conversation ended; and in half an hour the coach stopped before a large pottery belonging to Baker, Bourne & Baker. As he got out my companion gave me his card, "John McNeil, Liverpool," saying, "I have found so much pleasure in your conversation that you must promise to pay me a visit when you return to Liverpool. I will present you to my two daughters, and we will all receive you with pleasure." I of course was obliged to give him my card in exchange. He glanced at it twice, and in a doubtful sort of way read it over, "Vincent Noble!" "No, sir," I said; "Vincent Nolte, the very gentleman you were inquiring about." "Ah! so, so," he said. "Well sir, glad to have had a sight of you. Do



not fail to call when you come to Liverpool again. Farewell, sir!" And so the coach rolled on.

So soon as I arrived in London I went to my chancery solicitor, Mr. Low, showed him the letter that Mr. Lace had given me to Mr. Roscoe, and said to him, "Now, Mr. Low, if there is any delay, I will know where to look for the cause of it: let us gain time."

I had not failed to inform Mr. Baring, then at his country-seat, "the Grange," of my arrival, and somewhat of my projects; especially I spoke of his purchasing our property at New Orleans. After a delay of two weeks the mail brought me the following answer:—

"THE GRANGE, Sept. 11, 1826.

"MY DEAR SIR:—I had heard of your arrival, and at the same time of your having gone to Liverpool, and partly indolence, but more uncertainty where my letter would find you, prevented my writing to you. I shall be in town this day week for a few days, when I may perhaps catch you. My house here is just now full of friends, who take up most of my time, or I would propose to you to come and talk over your affairs here. I shall be happy to see you get on your legs fairly again, my dear Sir, and with courage and care I have no doubt of it; and although I am every day more and more retiring from active life, I shall be ready to give what support circumstances will permit. The Havre scheme seems by no means bad, if there should be any opening to attach yourself to any existing house in good business, but, generally speaking, you will find European places desperately shaken by the late storms that wrecked so cruelly all your hopes.

"I am not disposed, nor would it be convenient to me, to advance on or purchase the New Orleans property—it strikes me, that by such a move you rather fix yourself again in the same spot, a measure that may be doubtful. Your creditors have acted most wisely in giving you their full power. No other plan could possibly save them from the endless intricacies of law and equity. You must take care that the hostile creditor, who refused his assent, does not lay his hands on you. When I see you I will talk over the business of your liquidation with you. The settle

ment with Crowder's assignees is most judicious. Of the various scrapes I have seen you in, that which at last brought you down was certainly the one in which you had the least of blame to lay to your charge, and I see with pleasure that resolution does not fail you. It should fail no man whose mind is independent and well regulated. I believe I once before told you, that in my opinion you stand adversity better than prosperity, and this is the case with most people. Keep up your courage, my dear Sir, and I dare say all will do well again. Nobody will see this realized with more pleasure than

Yours, sincerely,

A. BARING."

A few days after my return from Liverpool, one Saturday, about exchange hours, I was honored with an unexpected visit. It was a sheriff officer, with a writ against me, at the suit of Baker, Bourne & Baker, for the sum of £1,000. Now I remembered, that among the exchange paper used by our house was a draft for £1,000, payable to this firm, and accepted by the Denistouns, and that this was one of the first notes which the Barings had allowed to be protested. The reader will remember that my *compagnon du voyage*, Mr. McNeil, had left the coach to call upon this firm. Our odd rencontre would naturally be the first topic of conversation, and the Messrs. Baker & Bourne had taken advantage of Mr. McNeil's information to lay hands upon me. My arrest took place on Saturday, at exchange hours, and my London friends were early in shutting their counting-rooms on Saturday, that they might go into the country. This was the case with the Barings, Sillem, Rücker, and others, to whom I could have gone. So I had to let myself be carried off to one of the so-called "sponging houses" in Chancery lane. The London Sundays are never too agreeable; and to look at one through the grated window of a house in Chancery lane was anything but delightful. On Sunday I wrote to Baring, and to my friend Mr. Sillem, and sent the letters early on Monday morning. Surety was required that I would not leave the country until the question of the debt should be settled. Mr. Sillem gave the required bonds, and drew me out of my prison about two o'clock; a vile hole it was, where

even a bed or a dinner could only be procured at a most exorbitant price. The Messrs. Baring undertook to settle with Baker, Bourne & Baker, and bought the draft, on behalf of my creditors, for £333.

My process went on its regular course. It was my only occupation—and no wonder—to see that nothing delayed. The first decision, that of the Vice-Chancellor, went against us. The judgment was superfluously pronounced, and without proper motives. I at once appealed to the upper court, and to the Lord Chancellor, and chose, as barrister, the celebrated Basil Montagu, and, by his advice, the not less renowned Mr. Heald, as special pleader. After many postponements and pleadings, which I never missed, the matter was finally decided. One half the delay was caused by the special pleader employed by my antagonists. This, one of the most learned advocates in England, was then called Sir Edward Sugden, and was, by the last Derby ministry, made Lord High-Chancellor of England, under the title of Lord St. Leonards. When the day, previously appointed by Lord Eldon, arrived to hear the argument, on some point or other of the matter debated between plaintiff and defendant, it was Sir Edward's usual remark, that he had not yet had time to examine the thing carefully, and must therefore beg for a further postponement. The second cause of the delay was a circumstance that it took me some time to understand. During my regular, uninterrupted visits to the Court of Chancery, where he saw me take a seat among the advocates, instead of behind Basil Montagu, Lord Eldon became so familiarized with my face that he knew very well who I was, and what brought me there. Several times, when I urged Mr. Montagu to get a day positively appointed on which my case should be heard, he would say, pointing at me, "On Saturday I'll hear the case of that American gentleman there." Then turning towards the clerk, he would say, "Let it be the first." That meant, that among the many petitions which were placed before him on that day, the papers relating to me should be on top. Saturday is the day on which all proceedings connected with bankruptcy are brought up and discussed. The list of the order in which they are to come up is



printed, and stuck up on the door of the court-room. Every morning, as I made my way there, I found at the head of this list "*Nolte vs. the Assignees of Crowder, Clough & Co.*" As an entire day was frequently occupied in the discussion of a single point, I fancied my cause secure. The list remained unaltered the whole week until Friday. Then, and on the following day, Saturday, I remarked that the words above quoted were no longer on the upper part, but on the fourth line; so that my cause was not to be heard until all the preceding ones had been dealt with. This was incomprehensible to me. I asked a variety of subaltern functionaries the meaning of it, but could get no other answer than "We do not know, sir," or "By direction of his lordship." This was all the information that I could get. Several times had Lord Eldon noted me and my petition, and yet there it remained fixed, at its old place, during four days of the week at the head, on Friday and Saturday third or fourth. Finally, I inquired about the individual who prepared the list, and I learned that that excellent man had an agreeable custom of altering the order of cases upon the roll, when urged to do so, by a bribe from one of the solicitors in chancery. The case for which a solicitor required delay very seldom came to a hearing. Delay, endless delay, was the watchword in the Court of Chancery. The solicitors, whose dealings with their clients were usually in writing, in my time, charged 3s. 4d. for every letter that they received and had to read; then 6s. 8d. for every consultation that grew out of the correspondence, and finally, 13s. 6d. for every written instruction that they gave to a barrister. Thus every conference in the course of a suit cost £1 2s. The longer they could carry on this amusement the better of course for their pockets. Herein lay one of the manifold causes of the year-long delays of suits in the Court of Chancery. The discovery was important, and there was no way to end the matter but by bringing it to the notice of the Lord Chancellor. That however could not be done by writing. The Lord Chancellor, president of the Cabinet, and speaker of the House of Lords, has entirely too much upon his shoulders to remember his directions to an unknown clerk. I must, then, speak to him, but *how*, was the hard point. One portion of the great hall of the Court of

Chancery was separated from the rest by a single balustrade. At the right hand of the Lord Chancellor's seat was a small door, leading into his own room, in which he robed and unrobed, and the custody of which was confided to a door-keeper. I went to him, and told him that I must at once speak to the Chancellor, on business of great importance. The answer was, "You can't see him. His lordship is robing himself." I, however, pressed my desire very hard, and supported it by slipping a sovereign into the hand of the official. Then he said, "I'll let you speak to his secretary," and so opened the door. I reiterated my request to the secretary, and showed him, with the greatest politeness, that I could only enlighten his lordship upon the object of my visit; that I had information of very great importance to give him, which would convince him at once of the pressing nature of the whole affair. "Well sir," he answered, "on your own responsibility." He then opened the door of the Chancellor's private chamber. Lord Eldon, all ready rigged and robed, was sitting by a small writing-table. I stepped forward, and said, "My lord." He look up, gazed at me earnestly, but as though he knew me, and asked "What do you want, sir?" I related as rapidly as possible the object of my visit. "Shameful! shameful!" he said. "I'll see to it." Whereupon I made my bow, and left the room; saying only, "I thank you, my lord." The evil condition of the matter which had amazed me so much was then ameliorated, and an important gain of time made possible for the future. Lord Eldon, as I have before remarked, seldom found my opponent, Sir Edward Sugden, ready to give an answer to any part of the pleading. "I am not just now prepared to answer that question, my lord; but I shall be so at the next meeting," were the words which the lawyer usually returned for answer. I had remarked that, from time to time, Lord Eldon took his pencil, and made notes upon the margin of the petition. "These," Mr. Montagu, my lawyer, said, "are notes for questions which my lord proposes to bring forward at the next hearing of the case." On my further question, as to whether it was possible to get a sight of these notes, Mr. Montague replied that it was impossible; but he added, laughingly, that they would be of the utmost value to any

pleader who could get possession of them. Now I gave myself up to the procuring of an abstract of these notes for our pleader, Mr. Heald. I succeeded, by using the golden key; which, as Wieland says, in his Oberon, will open every lock. Scarcely could he trust his eyes, when he saw this proof of my cleverness in his hands. By these he gained important knowledge, so as always to be ready to answer any of these questions, for which Sir E. Sugden required time and postponement. I remember one time in particular where a new "hearing of the case" was appointed by the Lord Chancellor for the next Saturday, and my antagonist begged for a postponement. Lord Eldon, however, answered with visible decision, "No, no! Sir Edward, that will not do. I will hear the case on Saturday."

At last the day of decision so important to me and to my creditors drew nigh. During the pleadings, Mr. Montagu had said to me at every question of the Chancellor's, "His lordship goes all the way with us," and prophecied a positive success. I had employed a stenographer especially for the purpose, and was therefore in condition to send a copy of the very words of the Lord Chancellor to New Orleans. It went entirely in our favor, upset the decision of the Vice-Chancellor, and established as law, what had never before been so settled in England, that the whole firm must answer for the act of a single partner doing foreign business on account of the house, and that such act could not be construed to bind only the partner who acted, as had been attempted in this case. This was the more important, that, in the contrary case, the dividend on our whole advance would hardly have surpassed three per cent. I cannot quit the subject of this decision without recording my astonishment at the quiet, self-possessed manner and clearness of explanation with which it was given. Among the hundreds and hundreds of cases awaiting decision; among the thousand upon thousand of affairs which Lord Eldon had to occupy his attention, yet the whole mass of circumstances, complications, and queries were so systematically arranged in his brain, and their connection was so logical, that he was able to give his decision in so clear and distinct a manner, that you would have thought he was reading it, word for word



And yet this case had been surrounded with questions enough to make it drag along for two years.

The next step to be taken was to submit myself to an examination by the commissioners of the creditors in Liverpool, and to determine for what amount I, as creditor, should be inscribed. So clear a decision had not been expected. It was the last that Lord Eldon gave before quitting the ministry—for he held his place from a tory ministry, and was now obliged to give it up to the new Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst. Mr. Lace spoke of a "re-hearing of the case," which would have kept me, probably, a whole year longer in England. At last I understood what was the obstacle to my admission as creditor. All protested paper returned from abroad is, according to American law, subject to a loss of 20 per cent.; and as we were in the position to exact this from the Crowder creditors, and as that would have increased our claim £25,000, it is no wonder that Mr. Lace did all he could to oppose us. By the arrangement of our endorsers in New Orleans with the bank, our creditors were plainly informed, that although bound, by the letter of the law, yet they would not be obliged to pay. There remained to me, then, the choice between a new, wearisome process, the result of which could not be foretold, or an immediate paying into bank the first dividend, which of course all our creditors must desire. Finally, I determined upon the latter course.

When I returned to London, and informed the Barings of my determination to go at once to New Orleans, Mr. Holland told me that Mr. A. Baring would be in town the next week, and wished to ask me some questions about the suit I had just won—he himself had a suit which had been in chancery for fourteen years, and neither knew nor could guess to what end it would come; while mine, for a sum eight times as large, had been terminated in ten months. I waited for the arrival of my old, esteemed friend, and told him all that the reader knows already. Then I advised him to get one of his intelligent clerks, and to give him, as chief employment, attendance upon the case, with instructions to be vigilant until the decision. When, eighteen months afterwards, I saw Mr. Baring, I had the consolation of hearing that

he had followed my advice, and had gotten a decision four months before.

Then I started for New Orleans, by New York, and reached my former home in December, 1827. Then, for the first time, I learned what had been done with our property in New Orleans. Soon after my departure in May, 1826, my partner Hollander became very ill, and had left the place for the sugar plantation of his wife's parents. The liquidation remained, therefore, in the hands of Mr. Parker, who, at first a clerk with William Nott & Co., had been by their recommendation taken by us as a partner. At present he had found means to ingratiate himself again with this firm—no difficult matter, as Mr. Nott was always ill, and Parker very plausible. After getting a promise that he would be taken into this firm, he brought about a coalition of the two largest local creditors of my house, W. and J. Montgomery, and Mr. Millaudon, with the firm of Nott & Co., in consequence of which he, as syndic, resolved, without any further notice in the papers than one which appeared that morning, to sell the entire property of my firm in a single lot, for ready money, at the putting up price of \$50,000, and bidding not to be waited for. This was done in September, a period of the year when half the white population was absent. Of course the purchasers were the three abovenamed firms. When I visited New Orleans, in 1838, this property had been sold shortly before for the sum of \$800,000, and since that it has greatly increased in value. This careless measure, so injurious to the great mass of our creditors, could not be helped. The whole of the next year I was employed in the further liquidation of our debts.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, the two candidates—Jackson's lack of qualifications for the office—Edward Livingston the first projector and leader of Jackson's election—Intrigues in his favor—Unworthy means to ensure his success—Jackson revisits New Orleans, in 1827, as a candidate—Electioneering manœuvres—The article in *The American*, a New York paper—I am set upon, in my dwelling-house, by a couple of his followers—Final departure from New Orleans—Havre—Paris—Fruitless attempts to found a concern at Havre—Acquaintance with an English banking-house, Daly & Co., in Paris—It leads to the establishment of a concern at Marseilles, as branch of the house; Pierre Maillet & Co., at Martinique, together with Maillet, Cage & Co., at Havre, and Daly & Co., at Paris, as sleeping partners—Before the opening of my new establishment, I visit England and Hamburg, the latter place only for five days—Return by way of England and Paris—Arrival in the French capital, on the morning of July 27th, 1830—The July Revolution—Departure for Marseilles—The failure of Daly & Co. follows close at my heels, and obliges me to return in haste to Paris—Journey to Havre, in behalf of Daly's creditors—The holding back of the Havre house, and the consequent impossibility of ferreting out the true state of affairs—The sudden crippling of the machinery and uprooting of the foundation of the new house in Marseilles renders its entire dissolution necessary—A fresh journey in search of subsistence stares me in the face.

THE time for choosing a new president was at hand. The election was to take place in a year, and General Jackson was the favorite candidate. Probably throughout the whole Union there was no man who had more thoroughly disregarded the Constitution than this man; and all who had lived in his immediate neighborhood, who had known and observed him, could not repress the positive conviction, that of all the candidates he was the least fitted for president; since his greatest gifts were only physical courage,



intense fieryness, and indomitable will. Respect for law, or the ideas of others, or command over his inborn passionateness of character, had he never felt. He was the first candidate for the presidency who was brought forward and elected by bribery, under the advice of the most corrupt man in the United States, a man already mentioned in these memoirs, Edward Livingston. It was an easy matter for the creatures who obeyed his nod to find out the most popular democrats of the various States, who were not always sought for among the most respectable inhabitants; to win them, and to keep them by promises of certain fat and honorable offices; to open their zeal, and, in a word, to make them satellites, prepared to strain every nerve, to silence every suggestion of conscience that stood in their way, and in the way of electing their candidate. A couple of examples will be enough. A certain militia colonel by the name of Swartwout—the same who, as the reader will remember, was attached by Gen. Wilkinson for high treason—who, in all his life, had never attempted anything great, nor been of the slightest use to his country; but who was always ready to talk politics in every rum-hole and pot-house, until he grew to be quite an orator, or at least to be taken for one; this man lorded it in New Jersey, to which state he belonged, as a beloved and popular man, and had it in his power to muster a very heavy collection of presidential votes. He was promised, if he would procure a majority for Jackson in his State, the most remunerative office in the United States; to wit, the collectorship of the port of New York. New Jersey gave her vote for Jackson, and Swartwout got his price. One day, a couple of years after this, he disappeared. He had gone to France, and now lives in Paris; but in going he left a slight deficit in his treasury of \$600,000. Part of this money was laid out in Texas lands; the rest he took with him in cash.

I will mention two other examples. The marshal of the United States for the District of New York, William Price, who had been able to procure for Jackson a majority in New York, had received his office and other things as rewards. At the defalcation of Swartwout he appeared very active in his preparations to go in pursuit of that gentleman. Accordingly, in about fourteen

days he also disappeared, leaving a deficit of \$200,000, and he is now with his friend in Paris.

The third example of this bribery system is the former printer and publisher of the New Orleans Gazette, the notorious drunkard Peter K. Wagner, from Baltimore, appointed by Jackson "naval officer" at New Orleans, where immense sums, the tonnage tax of foreign vessels, passed into his hands. This one did not run away, but was obliged to give up his place, in consequence of a deficit in *his* cash-box of \$70,000.

On his candidate voyage Jackson had visited several of the Western States; his own, in which he dwelt as cotton planter, included; and he determined to go to the cradle of his renown, New Orleans, but as simple citizen, sending there also his cotton crop, about eighty bales. The same steamboat that brought the cotton bore also the American hero. A Frenchman would have called that steamboat "the bark that carried Cæsar and his fortunes." He was received with joy; a mob of the more youthful niggers, carefully drilled by Sheriff Morgan, stood at the corners of the streets, and cried "Hurrah for Jackson;" and the general, in simple citizen's guise, surrounded by the electoral committee, stepped on shore. On every occasion, he endeavored to give proof of amiability of character, of esteem for the laws, etc.; hiding carefully from all military display.

To me, who during the defence of the city, had had the general daily and immediately under my eye, and whom no shade of his character could or did escape, all this comedy seemed so mean, and at the same time so absurd, that I, who had little to do, could not withstand the desire to send to my friend Charles King, editor of the New York American, a droll description of the visit, which showed a perfect acquaintance with the city. Mr. King published it. It delighted ordinary readers, but Jackson's partisans in New Orleans, particularly the members of his election committee, were rendered furious. The publisher of the American was written to, and the name of the author demanded—he refused to give it. For the first few weeks no one thought of me, who had so recently returned from Europe; but after a while it was concluded that nobody but I could have written it; and Mr. Slidell, secretary of

the committee, was sent to demand a formal explanation. The reader can guess that this had no result, as I only expressed wonder at the presumption, and expressed it mockingly ; which I ventured to do, because I lived on the friendliest footing with Mr. Slidell, and at one time, before he sought to still his conscience for this political role, had received him as a most intimate friend at my house. So soon, however, as I observed, that he was allowing himself to be used as the tool of a political faction, all intimacy, and finally all intercourse, ceased. I had seen too many examples of the extremities to which American party spirit will go, not to keep myself clear of any mingling in politics—not to choose my companions with prudence. Also, I felt no interest in the success of this or that party ; yet, although I felt no particular esteem for the other candidate, John Quincy Adams, I would very unwillingly have seen him defeated by the filthy intrigues of a most unprincipled man—I mean, of General Jackson. My good friend Counsellor Custis, now Chief Justice of the supreme court in New Orleans, was at the head of Jackson's opponents, and was one of the most important members of the Adams election committee. We had many a confidential talk about men and things, and mourned over the part which a man of such undeniably extraordinary talents as Edward Livingston, was forced to play, in order to keep himself on the surface merely of society. The whole combination to make Jackson president was his work. From this only could he expect the restoration of his crushed financial position—from this alone could he draw a possibility of regaining the esteem of his countrymen. The consequences proved that he had reckoned rightly, so far at least as he was personally concerned ; but a pure patriot Jackson was not, and could not be, and the results showed that a far better man might have been chosen. The parallel between Jackson and others, who were better fitted for the lofty position at which he was aiming, had taken such possession of me, by reason of my opportunities for observation, and the great attention I had given to it, that I determined, as much for my own pleasure as from any other motive, to write a letter to him, wherein the whole position of affairs at the time was set forth, and Jackson's merits and demerits, as



well as his own, were contrasted. My friend Custis and others urged me to print this letter, and I did not refuse. It was certainly the best I had ever written in English. But few copies were circulated in New Orleans, but many were sent to the election committees in the north. From the printers the name of the author was discovered, and I need not say that what I had written purely for my own amusement procured for me many enemies, and the deadly hate of most of Jackson's followers. In New Orleans I was a fallen, but not dishonored man. People wondered that I did not follow the American custom of comforting myself in the bar-rooms, and seeking for consolation in brandy, but that I still attended to business, and still held my head high. Most of them could not understand why the loss of my lofty mercantile position did not induce me to descend the social ladder also, and that my self-respect was not in the slightest degree lessened. I was blameless. This steeled me during that last mournful year in New Orleans, while I was bringing about the liquidation there. The year was one of the most painful in my life. Of my two most intimate friends, one, William Hill, of the Denistoun firm, had died of yellow fever; the other, William B. Milligan, had lost by a frightful accident his newly married wife, and remained at the North.

Early the next year, 1829, my long-desired return to Europe was rendered possible; I could embark for Havre—but not until one more trial had been passed through. The partisans of Jackson could not let me go without first revenging themselves upon me. One of the most ferocious, F. B. Ogden, to whom Jackson had promised, for his election services, the Liverpool consulate, had determined to attack me in my own house. He had brought a witness with him, in order to lay his misdeed before the public. The twain entered my room lightly, while I was seated at my dinner with my back to the door; but so soon as I caught a glimpse of them, I made one spring behind my writing-desk, on which lay two loaded pistols, which I seized. It was comical to behold how the two good-for-nothings retired, cursing in disappointment. The whole city was informed of the affair by a placard.

that same evening, and the larger portion of the citizens, to their honor be it said, were exceedingly incensed.

Day and hour were appointed for my departure. All my former clerks and several friends had assembled to accompany me on board; for the news had gone through the city, that the Jacksonians would make one more attack before my embarkation. I rescinded my resolution to go on board either early in the morning or late at night; and chose to go through the high street, by the clear sunshine of 3 o'clock P.M. The Levée was thronged with a cheering crowd as I went on board and the vessel moved out to sea.

Thus, then, two-and-twenty years after my first visit, and sixteen since the establishment of my firm, I bade farewell to the city wherein I had hoped to gain the reward of so many struggles, peace and independence for my old age. But, tossed by a hurricane—for the crisis which I have described was more than an ordinary storm—I had nothing now left but my full physical and mental strength; health and elasticity of spirits that promised me happier days in the future.

Mr. Alexander Baring had cared for my immediate support in Paris, whither I went from Havre, by a more than sufficient remittance. I saw myself in a new sphere, where I could hope from my ability and services for a connection with some already established house. But the only two chances for this in Havre remained unattainable by me. Both of these were houses of some years' standing, which had risen gradually to a certain eminence, and had attained influential positions. They both seemed inclined to accept my proposals, made to them through a business friend; but, after some days' consideration, they declined them. That they were frightened by the knowledge of the readiness with which I undertook and carried out the most extensive schemes, and that I might compromise the safety of their young establishments, I could not conceal from myself. Neither could I consider them quite in the wrong. My business tendencies were for large speculations, and could be none other, if the rare and extraordinary sphere in which I had commenced be regarded. I had been early intrusted with the management of very large sums, and had

been accustomed to form, carry forward, and conclude great combinations. To descend from this to the elementary rules of our mercantile fathers, to accumulate and keep together small gains, and to form this habit, was almost impossible for me. Not that the progress was too slow, but that small gains closed the door upon all great combinations; not that I wanted "to make a fortune as one gains a battle,"\* but because the pygmy advance of a daily small trade furnished no employment for my spirit of business. Great affairs exercised a magic power over me, and therein lay their charms for me, even while their object, the material gain, was greatly less interesting to me. Such an organization is not good for a merchant, but, on the contrary, is likely to produce sad results, as my own experience has taught me. Mercantile necessity is usually opposed to most intellectual designs. It yields no part, but requires a man's whole moral strength, and monopolizes it for the use of its great object, which is gain, gain of all kinds, gain at every hour. Gain is the soul of the mercantile strife, the goal of its desires. In fixed, unremitting attention to his means consists the first and greatest virtue of the merchant—all others take rank after this. That such an absorption of all the energies usually leaves the head empty and dry, and prevents any play of the imagination, is easily conceivable, and for this reason I could not but despise the tricks of the trade, and be unwilling to confine myself to those close calculations which a merchant dares not neglect, if he remain true to his principle, and wishes to ensure and keep fast the results.

I could not easily remove the obstacles which kept me out of the above-mentioned Havre establishments. I foresaw this, and so stood up upon my watch-towers, and looked towards the east. Accident was against me. The Irish banking-house of Daly & Co., in Paris, wherein nearly all the Irish Catholics in that city had credit, and in many instances their whole capital invested, possessed a generally good reputation. They had a good deal of interest in French colonial sugars, through Maillet, Cage & Co., a house established in Havre, but originally of Martinique. As the

\* Napoleon's words at Antwerp, when, with Maria Louise, he received the deputation of merchants there.



most of this sugar was subject to great variability in Havre, and to a very slight one in Marseilles, the house of Daly & Co. resolved to establish a partner in Marseilles, to look after Martinique cargoes. It came to my ears that they were looking for a good man of business. Daly, who was very much beloved by the Irish and by the principal legitimist nobles residing in Paris, was treasurer of the Union Club, to which most of the notable aristocrats, as well as the financial great folks, Rothschild, Hottin-guer, Mallet, and others, belonged. Mr. Francis Baring was a visitor at this club, and did me the honor to introduce me to Mr. Daly. I expected to see a man of business—he was nothing of the kind—but I withheld my scruples because of his popularity. I pleased him. Mr. Cage was called from Havre to Paris; and after many discussions, it was determined to found a branch at Havre, under the name of Nolte, Kenney & Co., with a nominal capital of 500,000 francs, of which Daly was to furnish for himself and Mr. Kenney 150,000, besides 100,000 for another friend; Maillet, Cage & Co., 125,000, and the remaining 125,000 by me, who had a prospect of getting it chiefly by the aid of Messrs. Barings. Mr. Kenney was a protégé of Mr. Daly's, employed in the counting-room, and not yet of age. For this reason he could not be intrusted with the firm. Messrs. Baring came voluntarily to my help; and I got 20,000 francs also from Mr. Jerome Sillem. Thus then the house was established. Circulars were printed, and I ran over to England, to see Mr. Alexander Baring and my other friends in London and Liverpool. I was heartily received everywhere. Then I spent five days in Hamburg. Thence, through Holland, I returned to England, with a view to go by Southampton and Havre back to Paris. The steamer was to sail from Southampton at 8 P. M. on the 24th, and in the forenoon I started in one of the best post-coaches for Southampton. We had made about twenty miles, when a new axletree took fire from the rapid friction. This produced a delay of two hours and a half, and we did not arrive until 10 P. M. The steamer had been gone for two hours, and there would be none other until Monday, 26th, at 8 o'clock. It was a beautiful clear night; the wind light and fair. In company with another passenger, I deter-

mined to cross in an open boat, whose master promised, for £10, to land us in Havre by Sunday morning. The matter appeared so certain, that, without thinking even of provision, we started at 11 o'clock. We had only made about four leagues when it fell calm, and we lay still in the middle of the channel until 6 P. M. on Sunday. Our impatience can be better understood when it is remembered that we had nothing to eat. A few small potatoes and a bit of ship-biscuit, which the crew shared with us, was all we could get. At last we saw floating near us the still bleeding head of a codfish, which a shark may just have bitten off, and we were fortunate enough to get hold of it. Never to me or to my companion had fish tasted so deliciously. The light wind that arose at sunset blew fair all night, and carried us into Havre on the morning of the 26th, where the notorious ordinances of that date had not yet been learned. I got a post-chaise and started instantly for Paris. At Rouen there were symptoms of disquietude. The regiment of guards there had been got into marching order, but the reason and the object were unknown. After a late dinner, I started, and rode all night. I was very anxious, although without knowing why. As, early in the morning, we drove from the post station at Courbevoie into the main street, we saw a whole regiment drawn up before the barracks of the royal body-guard. The postmaster at Courbevoie told me first of the ordinances, and intimated that a revolution was expected in Paris. On the great avenue of the Champs Elysée near the Arch of Triumph, a crowd surrounded my vehicle, tore out the white cockade from the postilion's head, and dismissed him with "*Vas te faire f*——." To the question of some officers at the barriere, as to where I was going, I answered, "To my house, Rue Chantierine, by Rue Royale and the Boulevards." I was told that I could not go that way, for that the Tuileries was surrounded, and the Rue Royale and Boulevards filled with the royal troops. I turned, therefore, to the left, and by Rue de la Pépinière and St. Lazare reached home. Before every house in the Rue de la Pépinière, particularly before the great hotels and factories, were crowds of citizens and laborers, who seemed to be waiting for the result of all this. The guard barracks were closed.

and a strong guard set over the doors. Scarce had I reached home, when a pair of friends, who were waiting my return, came in, and informed me of Polignac's ordinances, of the first insurrection of the people, of the barricades, and of the probable strife about to break out in the streets of Paris. In about two hours it did break out. I soon learned that early in the morning General Lafayette had come to the city, from his country-seat, Lagrange. I hastened to the Boulevards des Italiens; circulation was already partially stopped; barricades everywhere begun, but an earnest opposition not yet visible. Detachments of the royal guards rode about. After a two hours' walk I went home. In the evening and through the night an occasional distant platoon fire reached my ears. On the morning of July 29, I learned that the people had attacked the Hotel de Ville, and after seven repulses, and fighting all night, had succeeded in taking it. Again I sought the Boulevards. Before I reached the Rue d'Artois, now called Lafitte, I met a crowd of officers streaming into the residence of Lafitte. The whole court was filled, and matters began to be comprehensible. The Bourbons had had the folly to garrison Paris with the regiments composed of natives of the city, *enfants de Paris*; two of the colonels were Lafitte's countrymen, from Bayonne. He had written to them, and as soon as they found that their regiments would on no account fire upon their brothers, they had gone to Lafitte's, and swore allegiance to the provisional government. When I reached the end of the Rue d'Artois, near the Café Hardy, now the Maison Dorée, I saw some detachments of the Swiss guards marching up the Rue Grammont, and an occasional shot was fired on the Boulevards. The trees on both sides of the Boulevards were felled. The first important barricade that I saw was in the Rue Grange Bateluze, from whence it extended across the Boulevards to the Rue Richelieu. I went on, and with some trouble reached the Porte St. Martin, but went no further: indeed, progress was impossible, because of the numberless barricades and the masses of people. Single royal artillerymen riding along the Boulevards were followed with shots from the windows and cellars. I saw several officers fall dead from their horses. During my walk, which had no other object than



the satisfaction of my curiosity, a barricade was thrown up at the corner of the Rue d'Artois, where Lafitte lived, as if by magic, and I had to clamber over it to get home.

I do not feel called upon to say any more about the "three days of July," except that the behavior of the people, principally *ouvriers*, in their fighting with the royal guards, amazed me. It is well known that when the Tuileries was stormed, a casket containing 2000 pieces of gold was found by a day-laborer in the rooms of the Duchesse de Berry, and was given up to the government. But what must have been seen to be believed, was the quiet and order with which hundreds and hundreds of *ouvriers*, in single processions, betook themselves from the field of conflict back to their work, as if nothing out of the way had occurred. Repose was soon restored to all Paris, not slowly but all of a sudden; and but for the felled trees upon the Boulevards, and the barricades still standing in every quarter, particularly in the *quartiers* St. Denis and St. Martin, there would scarcely a trace have been recognized of a revolution which had dethroned a king and set another ruler in his place.

So soon as I learned of General Lafayette's arrival in Paris, I proposed to Commodore Nicholson and other American friends, to form a body-guard for the old general, and to accompany him everywhere. The idea pleased him. An assemblage of American citizens convened at the Restaurant Lointier; and here the well-known Fenimore Cooper opposed my idea, and suggested in the place of it a dinner. This trivial notion had no object but to place Mr. Cooper at the head of the affair, and to give him an opportunity of making a speech, which would be printed in Galigani's Messenger, and show to the American people his participation in the revolution of July. However, his proposal was accepted, and the general was obliged to content himself with this honor. So began and ended my acquaintance with Mr. Cooper, who, in his whole demeanor, in his speech, and his demand for public esteem, possessed none of the amiable modesty of Washington Irving, and never could conceal his pretentious claims.

One more reminiscence of those days. It is of the Prince Talleyrand, and is not, I believe, generally known. After the altera-

tion of the *Charte*, he sought the Chamber of Deputies, to swear to the new constitution. As he got out of his carriage he caught the eye of a friend, who asked him confidentially the object of his visit. Talleyrand replied, to swear to the new constitution. "But, Monseigneur," said the friend, "you have done the same thing to fourteen others." "My friend," said Talleyrand, "let us hope that this will be the last." The prince knew the value of an oath in his country, and the history of our days, since the revolution of February, 1848, has proved the perfect correctness of his judgment.

The news that two vessels laden with sugar were on their way from Martinique to Marseilles, made a journey thither necessary. When I went to the Messrs. Daly for their quota of the capital for the new house in Marseilles, I could only get a quarter of it, but was told that I might draw on them from that city for the rest. This did not please me, but the possibility of their being embarrassed did not enter my head. They enjoyed universal esteem, and, as far as could be judged, a well-deserved credit. Thereupon I went to Marseilles, made my domestic arrangements, and received both cargoes of sugar. The market was empty, and a sale, with good profit, consequently easy. The profit was scarcely in my hands when drafts for their share came from Messrs. Daly & Co., with the request to send them back accepted. I did so, although I began to distrust, and proposed to ask at the banking house of Luke Callaghan, in Paris, and only to send my letter if I found the credit of the Daly's unshaken. A few days after I heard that they had suspended payment, and that Maillet, Cage & Co. had followed their example. The object of the Marseilles firm and the prospect of a regular and productive business vanished. An immediate prospect of support for a costly trade, with this lessened capital, and the difficulties resulting from the July revolution, was of course out of the question. It was my duty to look out for my future, and, to do so, I must return to Paris.

On my arrival I was told a bit of city news, that the house of J. Lafitte & Co. was in the greatest embarrassment. They, as well as Daly & Co., had been shaken by the same causes. Both

had committed the same fault, with the difference, that Lafitte had a large capital of his own, while Daly's book showed how very poor and unreliable was the basis of his business. The ancient and close connection between Lafitte and Coutts & Co., of London, who were intrusted with the wealth of the highest and richest nobles in England, had brought into their hands an immense capital, belonging to English travellers in France and Italy. Many of these travellers had settled in those countries, leaving their money in Lafitte's hands. It was the common calculation, that 50,000 Englishmen were living in France; and that if each were to spend but ten francs a day, 15,000,000 francs a month, and 180,000,000 a year of English gold would be spent in France. It is evident, that if one-third of these people, or even fewer, were to leave their funds in Lafitte's hands, it would make up a capital far beyond the need of his banking business; and so his own capital might be untouched. But, in order to make it lucrative, Lafitte had loaned it on mortgages of every sort, had invested it in factories, had bought real estate, forests, etc., so that it was no longer of use in his business, but the foreign capital served for his operations. The July revolution alarmed most of the English in France; they departed, and drew their money from the banker. This emigration became stronger every day, and emptied the portfolios and the chests of the house. For the first time, the credit of this mightiest French banking-house was shaken, and their embarrassment was notorious. Then the new king, Louis Philippe, came to the help of his friend Lafitte, who had greatly contributed to his elevation, and bought of him the part of the forest of St. Germain which he owned, for the sum of 9,000,000 francs. Even this help, however, was not needed, and the storm blew over.

What Lafitte had felt so heavily Daly also in his measure suffered. The original capital of this firm was scarcely worth naming, but the money of the Irish Catholics, and the capital left in Daly's hands, by the just fallen London house of Wright & Co., was important; Daly himself, a former paymaster in the army, was a nullity. His only business-man, the bookkeeper, was a Creole, from Martinique. By him he was connected with Maillet, Cago



& Co., more closely than anybody knew. But it was decided, in the end, by a lawsuit, that Maillet, Cage & Co. were recognized as partners in Daly's house, and that their creditors might come upon the effects of Daly, and so get more than they expected, when they expected only to be paid from the effects of the Martinique firm.

Precisely on my return to Paris, there took place a meeting of Daly's creditors, to which I was invited. Most of them were utterly ignorant of business—they were gentlemen. It was of the utmost importance to understand the relationship between Daly and Maillet, Cage & Co. Daly himself had vanished, and his remaining partner, Plowden, not in condition, or not inclined to throw any light upon the subject. On motion of Mr. Luke Callaghan, who possessed the confidence of all the Irish creditors, I was invited to go to Havre, and examine into the whole affair. Here I soon discovered, what I had already surmised, that as Daly had used the capital of his friends in his transactions with Maillet, Cage & Co., so had these latter used the money that they procured so easily for their house in Martinique; that they had given enormous acceptances; and that, as guaranty for all this, they had only the prospective sugar crop, upon which they had made great advances. M. Cage did not think it necessary to inform me of their partnership with Daly. Deceived in like measure by Daly and the Havre house, and in no way bound by their relation with each other, I resolved to take no further steps in the matter. The basis of my establishment in Marseilles was shaken. The promised credit with Daly's house was rendered impracticable by his failure, and the originally contemplated capital had never been made up. All these circumstances compelled me quietly to close the just opened establishment in Marseilles, to return to Paris, and to look about me for something else to do.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE SUPPLYING OF ARMS.

Visit to General Lafayette, who had been appointed commander-in-chief of all the National Guard of the realm—The arming of that force—A couple of lines from the General procures me admission to General Gerard, the Minister of War—First contract for 50,000 old French muskets from the Prussian fortresses—Appointment of Marshal Soult as minister of war—The rival authority of Lafayette, as head of the National Guard, is in the way of M. Casimir P rier, the new president of Louis Philippe's Council—The general commandancy of the National Guard is abolished by a vote of the Chambers—Lafayette drops the honorary title, and altogether retires—The extension of my contract for arms with the war ministry—Daly's bequest—I make the acquaintance of two blacklegs and cheats, G. and O.—5000 stand of the arms purchased at Hamburgh arrive in Havre, and are rejected at the arsenal, as unfit for use—The same fate befalls 5000 more at Strasbourg—I succeed, however, in extricating myself from the bad bargain, not only without loss, but even with advantage—Delivery of sabres for the army—Colonel Lefrancois, director of the arsenal at Havre—Contrast between him and another officer of rank—Remarks upon the contractor business in general.

THE provision of arms for the National Guard, at the desire of Louis Philippe's minister of war, General Gerard, gave me the first opportunity here of exhibiting my cleverness, with profit to myself. I knew of the friendship between the generals Lafayette and Gerard. Lafayette, who had been named commandant general of all the National Guard in the department of the Seine, soon received the command of the whole National Guard throughout France. He had his head-quarters in the former palace of Count Perigaux, in the Rue de la Chauss e d'Antin. Here he received numberless deputations from every portion of the kingdom. From morning till evening the house was besieged by National Guards, and on appointed reception days it was impossible to see

the general without obtaining a written ticket of admission. I did not know this when I presented myself in the crowded rooms. There I saw the aides-de-camp excessively busy in going hither and thither, introducing people, among whom were several ladies, to the general. I went to the first who came near me, and learned that a ticket was necessary. There was no time to lose; so I gave the aide-de-camp my card, with a request that he would show it to the general, and tell him that I was waiting for him in the reception chamber. In a moment he returned, with a polite request from the general that I would wait for a few moments; there were some ladies with him at the moment, of whom he would rid himself as soon as possible, and then I should be at once introduced. In a moment the aide-de-camp came to tell me that the general was ready, and to open for me the door of his private room. The moment he saw me he rose, came towards me with open arms, embraced me very kindly, and instructed the adjutant, who took me for an Englishman, to let no one in until he should ring.

Alone with the general, I wished him joy of the altered state of affairs in his country, of the apparently general recognition of those principles to which he was devoted, of the post which he now held as guardian of the public peace, and of the new step taken by his nation towards freedom. He took it all as I intended it, and thanked me by a hearty pressure of the hand. Yet it did not escape me that he was far from being satisfied, and my idea that the course of affairs did not please, became certainty, as he said, "We have not yet gone so far as the Americans, but the day will perhaps come." What he wanted was to imitate Washington in France. As commandant-general of all the National Guards he was next in dignity to the king, but in the public opinion he was higher; for the Bourbons had never been loved, and the Duke of Orleans was placed upon the throne, not because he was a Bourbon, but in spite of it. Lafayette's friend, Lafitte, when premier, found this improper, and his successor, M. Cassimir Perier, still more so. It is well known how the powerful will and inflexible character of this gentleman governed even Louis Philippe himself. On the 20th February Perier suc-



ceeded his friend Lafitte, and one month afterwards he got passed through the Chamber of Deputies an act to destroy the office of Commandant-General of the National Guards, as being useless, since the restoration of public tranquillity. The honorary title was offered to Lafayette, but he refused this gilding of a bitter pill. So soon as he heard of it on December 24, he resigned all his commands, even that of the department of the Seine, and stated as reason for refusing the title, that simply honorary titles were unrepugnant. The whole affair wounded him deeply. He saw, however painful it might be, that once withdrawn from the eyes of the people and the National Guard, he must take leave of that popularity so dear to him, and descend to a lower position in the world. This I particularly saw in his features, at the great ball given for the benefit of the poor, in the opera house, on the 8th of January, 1831. Although the whole royal family was present, he came in, clad as a simple citizen, leaning upon the arm of his friend Odillon Barrot, noticing nothing, and not even glancing at the balcony, where the king sate, surrounded by his family and ministers. His face had lost its natural, happy expression.

As our first interview was drawing to a close, an adjutant entered, and informed him that General Perneti and the artillery officers of the National Guard were assembled in the ante-room, and desired to wait on him. I rose to leave, but the general took my arm, with the words "You must go with me," and then asked what he could do for me. I asked him for an introduction to the Minister of War, General Gerard. He said he would send it to me; but on my remark, that one stroke of his pen would suffice, and that I feared to take up his invaluable time, he observed, "it is true, my friend, two words will suffice, and I will give them to you immediately." He then sate down, and wrote an exceedingly kind letter, which contained the remark, that if Gerard had any business to employ me in, he would find me not only capable but an honest man, whom he might trust. This over, we passed into the room where the officers were waiting, drawn up in a semi-circle, and some ninety in number. After a short speech, Perneti proposed to present each officer in turn, but Lafayette declared that he would make the round, and that General Per-

netti could follow him, and mention to what corps each officer belonged. He accordingly did so, shaking hands with each officer in the American way. When this was over, Lafayette asked me, "What do you say to that, my friend?" I said, that I thought it no small labor to shake hands with ninety men; and that, in his place, I should have deputed one or more of my adjutants to help me, or contented myself simply with making an address. "No, no," said the general, "this matter is too serious. A touch of the hand is often more effectual than a discourse." He thus made use of an American custom, which he had learned forty years before, and proved that a simple shake of the hand was worth all the flourishes of eloquence. This is very visible among the negro slaves, who catch hold of each other's hands, hold on for a quarter of an hour, give a rapid shake occasionally, and burst out into great peals of laughter, without uttering a syllable. This is certainly heartiness in the fullest sense of the word.

My desire for an introduction to General Gerard had its origin in the report of an intention to make a provision of arms for the whole National Guard. I learned by the papers, and by private advices, that the Prussian government was about to sell at public auction a quantity of old or unneeded muskets, which had been thrown away by the French, in the retreat of 1813, and left upon the field; or which had been abandoned in the various depots, and which were now in Magdeburg and some of the Silesian fortresses. I wrote to the Hamburgh house of Sillem, Brothers & Co., and received assurances of the contemplated sale, and of their readiness to purchase on my account. I thereupon contracted with General Gerard for 50,000 old muskets, in good condition, in the French form, and for the price of 28 francs a piece. In this contract the government was bound for one year; I, not at all. A couple of specimens accompanied this contract, of which I sent one to Messrs. Sillem, who at once busied themselves in the purchase of a certain quantity of muskets, at the price of 12 marks 8 schillings to 13 marks. I issued other contracts of the same kind and on the same terms, to certain places upon the Rhine. The arms purchased in Hamburgh were shipped to Havre; those from the Rhine were sent to Strasbourg; and both were deposited

in the royal arsenals. The Strasbourg arrival was the first. Thither I sent a man, who had been recommended to me as clever and honorable, whom I shall only mention as M——, and to whom I shall refer by-and-by.

There were no difficulties about the liquidation, so soon as the closing of my new establishment in Marseilles had been resolved upon. I had sent a couple of cargoes of wine to New Orleans, which were to be returned in cotton. Had the capital promised by Daly Co. and Maillet, Cage & Co. been paid in, a lucrative business would at once have been founded. The preparations, however, had been too extensive. Clerks had been engaged at large salaries, some by me, in view of the *guarantied* important sugar-trade, and some by Daly—among whom a Parisian book-keeper at a salary of 6000 francs, whom I could have hired in Paris for 2000. A compromise must be made with these clerks, with my young partner, and with Daly's creditors. I must bring back my little family from Marseilles, give up my house there, throw up my leases, etc. Besides this burden, Daly had introduced to me two men, for the business of arming the French troops who were destined for Algiers, and sent from Marseilles. As these men are both dead, and are expiating probably the guilt of their influence upon my fate, in another world, I will speak of them as "O——" and "Gldstr—." The former was represented as a clever and honest man, perfectly trustworthy; the other as being proper to "do all sorts of dirty work," something inseparable from supply contracts. The sphere to which these men belonged was quite unknown to me; and to learn it by experience was impossible for me, who had belonged for so many years to the first mercantile circle of the capital, *haute finance*, and had therefore never become acquainted with inferior matters. Such at least was the report of Daly and his book-keeper, B——. But, before it was too late, I discovered that O—— was no better than G——; that they were closely bound together, and prompt for any roguery, and long since agreed to share the profits of their tricks. O—— was a native of Marseilles; G——, a Polish Jew, at one time a *commissaire* in the Prussian army, under the Duke of Brunswick, and who had gone over to the French host after



the battle of Jena; and was the same person who, in Napoleon's bulletin from Melodertschino, after the retreat from Moscow, is designated as the man who had caused the loss of 20,000 horses in a few weeks, which he asserted to have been lost in a single night. After this retreat, he fell into the hands of the Prussians, was sentenced to death, but commuted to perpetual imprisonment in Spandau; after a few years, he escaped to Paris, where he finally settled, and adopted the profession of money-lender. In a provision-contract for the French troops stationed in the Morea, under Marshal Maison, which had been procured for these two scoundrels, by Daly, money was wanting; which was the only reason for making me acquainted with these worthless fellows, in the belief that they could get employment in the contract for the troops in Algiers, and so make profit out of me. The ground of their connection with Daly was at first incomprehensible to me; but I had afterwards reason to surmise that Daly's profits existed only in figures on the books; that these two men were *de facto* his debtors for a very important sum, and that he had hoped that they would bring him new business out of this new organization in Marseilles.

Meanwhile the first provision of muskets arrived from Hamburg in Havre, and were received on my account by Delaroche A. Delessert & Co. My agent in Strasbourg informed me, that the inspector of artillery there, after opening the boxes and examining the muskets, had declared that, out of twenty opened boxes, scarcely one fit musket could be found, and those few of irregular model. A few days later, I heard the same news of the 1000 muskets in the arsenal at Havre. The receivers wisely determined to close the chests again, and to wait for instructions from me. My Strasbourg agent, M——, who thoroughly understood the art of carousing with the under officers and controllers, without advancing one step beyond this, had convinced himself that nothing could be done with the arms but to send them back—as they were not what I had ordered, and were unsaleable in France. Judge of the effect upon me, of the discovery that I had put a capital of 200,000 francs in useless muskets. To get at the bottom of the affair, I went to Havre, where the

arsenal was in charge of a meritorious and clever officer, of the Napoleon school, colonel of artillery, Lefrançois. He was called a stern, unamiable man, but he received my visit politely, and returned it the next day. He noticed on my table a "Keepsake," fresh from London. He took it up, turned over the leaves, and by his remarks upon the plates, showed me that he was not deficient in education or artistic cleverness. He also spoke of the German language, and said that he preferred Schiller, as a dramatist, to his great countrymen, Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire; to all, indeed, but Shakespeare. He seemed astonished to find an ordinary commissary utter his views on art and belles lettres, and would have talked I know not how long, if I had not recalled him to the muskets, with a *revenons à nos moutons*. We agreed next morning to go with the controller and examine 10 cases, containing 500 muskets. A friendly line preceded me to the arsenal, requesting the director to accept the Keepsake that had so much pleased him. When the muskets were unpacked before four controllers, I saw that not one was of the proper model. Indeed, seldom were six or seven successively like each other. All that was French about them was the barrels; the stocks were German. My Hamburgh correspondents knew as much about muskets as I did, namely, nothing at all. And as I had trusted that they would purchase after the model that I sent them, so had they trusted to an armorer named R——, whose conscience was of gutta-percha. At each musket came the question, "How can it be?" the only answer being "because of total disregard to the models." Then, for the first time, I learned, that according to the rules of the French artillery department, every musket must consist of 34 distinct parts, every one of which must be perfect and conformable to the model, before it could be approved of. The nature of my contract protected me from loss for non-fulfilment, but what was I to do with the muskets. My contract was for old but yet useful muskets on the French model, and it was frightful to see one after another set aside by the controllers, with the words "*fusil de rebut*." I asked and learned the cause of this *rebut* for every musket. I then inquired whether refused muskets could not be altered so as to conform to the model, and when told

yes, asked the cost. I was informed that each would cost 2 francs 50. Then I inquired if the government would not take them as they were, on my abating so much from my contract price, 28 francs. The director said he would take the matter in hand, and asked me to visit him often, and listen to his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*. I listened and wondered. After some days, he was informed by the Minister of War, Marshal Soult, who had succeeded General Gerard, that the muskets would all be taken at 25 50, and could be soon made to serve for the arming of the National Guard. He gave me this information that I might state it to the Minister. Chief of Division in the Artillery Department, Colonel T. de L——, who possessed the full confidence of the marshal, and who had his reasons for being partial to me, took the affair in hand, and as it had the marshal's approval, I got rid of the muskets, and made a very fair profit. This whole procedure showed me how to deal with the others, and enabled me to send those at Strasbourg to the arsenal at Metz. The shipment of the muskets from Hamburgh now went forward regularly. Importation of arms from Belgium was still forbidden, but I learned that the ministry was about to lift the prohibition. Muskets made in Lüttich are perfectly like the best French; and as I could buy a certain quantity for 28 francs, while the war ministry in Paris were willing to pay 32, I ordered 100,000 muskets, and doubled the order so soon as importation from Belgium was permitted. For the last half of this large contract I succeeded in putting my provision of arms upon a very sure basis, and was enabled to offer the Lüttich manufacturers  $28\frac{1}{2}$  or 29 francs, if they would take the risk of delivering the muskets at the arsenals of Lille, Metz, and Charleville, and be content to wait for payment until they had been received. Finally, by the interest I had obtained with the war ministry, I got a contract for 150,000 sabres, at 6 francs 50 cents. Contracts made by me with some German manufacturers on the Rhine, and even in Paris, at 5 fr. 50 to 5 75, would have made a brilliant affair of this, had not all my swords, as they arrived by the 10,000 or 15,000, been, by the influence of the war controller in the Rue Luxembourg, refused, because the back of the hilt was a quarter of a line narrower than



the regimental regulations. All my arguments on the absurdity of such strictness were of no avail, and as the controller was too strictly watched by the officers about him, for me to attempt any other means of convincing him, I took my swords and went to Havre. Colonel Lefrançois acknowledged the absurdity, and the first 20,000 were at once taken. I, of course, sent no more to the depôt at Havre, but imported all by the way of Havre. The English Keepsake remained unforgotten. The Colonel, who frequently came to Paris, to visit his sick wife, became a constant visitor at my house, although he could not always get me to listen to his translations of Schiller. He had made the Russian campaign, as one of the Imperial Artillery Guard; had lived a good while in Berlin and Königsberg, where he had learned German, and had for Napoleon (the first and only) a veneration that was almost adoration; and, spite of his feeble body, and countless and still painful wounds, he would have outbursts of enthusiasm rare in any but hot-blooded youth. With the exception of this constantly outbreking exaltation, he was an amiable and agreeable man. It is well known that most of the chiefs in the imperial army had not objected to a present, in reward for service rendered or to be rendered. This was particularly the case in supplies of arms. It cost me a struggle to persuade myself that Colonel Lefrançois belonged to the same category as his comrades of like rank, because his assistance to me had been not a matter of business, in influencing the controllers, but a pure matter of the heart; still I thought that my recognition of his services ought to be of use to him. The purchase of 150,000 swords demanded a capital of some 800,000 francs, and brought a profit of more than 20 per cent. I put some bank notes of 1000 francs in an envelope, addressed to him, and laid it upon my chimney-piece, or where he could see it. He saw it, observed its contents, and put it back, saying, "My dear sir, I cannot accept that." For a while I took his reply as final; but half an hour after, my servant took the same sum, in a new envelope, to his old, trusty servant, from whom it found its way into the colonel's hand. The end of it was, that two years later, during my absence from Paris, he heard that my wife was in some embarrassment for money. He called

upon her, and said, "My dear Madame Nolte, I have received a great deal of money from your husband, and have spent most of it as lightly as I came by it. What is left, however, I have brought back to you. Be good enough to take it. Your husband and your family will never be forgotten by me." Eighteen months afterwards, this worthy gentleman died.

Let me tell a story on the other side, of a person high in place in the military department. He had not the slightest objection to receive a present, if delicately offered; and I puzzled myself in vain to find a proper means, until my wife, who was acquainted with the whole matter, suggested a snuff-box. I bought a tasteful box, laid a 1000 franc note in it, folded with the cypher displayed, and at the proper time attracted his attention. "Ah, that is really a box in exquisite taste," he said. "General," I replied, "if it please you, accept it from me as a souvenir." He said, "Thank you," took the box, and opened it immediately. I waited with impatience, but not long. "Aha!" said he; "but you might as well understand that I am a great snuffer; another pinch would do no harm, my dear sir." He put the box in his pocket, and I, on reaching home, put my card and 1000 francs in a simple envelope, and sent it him.

This arms providing has its good and bad sides. The good is that one can, with proper prudence, be assured of profit on them. The bad is the uncertainty of their reception by the contractors. They must be literally conformable to contract, and precisely like the model, or the place-holders will take advantage of their position, to refuse them. There is but one way of dealing with these men, namely, to bribe them. Ever since my childhood, an epigram has run in my head, written upon an army contractor, who had gone to Carlsbad. - "Stax, by command of his doctor, is now taking a bath; confound him, he's always *taking* something." The thought of becoming a contractor was always unpleasant to me. For the idea of procuring the acceptance of imperfect arms, simply by bribery, was repulsive to me, as to every honest man; and I could make no moral distinction between the briber and the bribed. The morality of the great world, however, is much easier. Horace Walpole's remark, that every man had his

price, is too often true. General Jackson's partition of places, in case of his election for president—what was that but bribery!

My providing now went on well—furnishing the old muskets at 25 francs, and the new ones at 32—and when Belgian imports were permitted, it was still better. The provision was so easily and regularly managed, that it aroused the attention of the other furnishers—as for instance, Cassimir Perier's own iron factory, which had a contract for 100,000 muskets, at 32 francs. These gentlemen did me the honor, and Marshal Soult the injustice, to suppose that we two had a private understanding. But never did one word pass between the marshal and myself about the price, etc. Our entire conversation consisted of a short interrogatory, as to the possibility of procuring a certain quantity of muskets, and delivering them in a certain place, on an appointed day—as 15,000 muskets for the arsenal at Metz. If I said yes, I received a regular order. The marshal knew that he could trust me, and he showed his confidence in a matter that occurred after the close of our contract, and which was altogether uncalculated upon.

The whole cost of the arms brought into France by me, in the course of two or three years, was about 8,000,000 francs, to which the capital saved from the wreck of the Marseilles house, 200,000 francs, would not suffice. I, however, had had the good fortune to meet the bankers André and Cottier, to please them, to obtain their confidence, and their support, in my operations. The first venture succeeded so well that their confidence was much increased, and they placed very large sums at my disposal. These ventures were often 200,000 to 300,000 francs, for which they had no other security than my word and Marshal Soult's order. I remember once bringing M. Cottier an order for 500,000 francs. He looked at it, and cried out in astonishment, "My God, where do you get all this money?" Marshal Soult, it will be remembered, was much disliked in the Chamber of Deputies, a feeling which could not be satisfied except by his retirement from the ministry, and the recalling of General Gerard. My whole machinery, especially the organized method of payment for the supplies, was for a moment upset, and I could not get the orders as regularly as before; whereby I had to allow the weight



of my important advances to fall upon Messrs. André and Cottier. I needed, to get matters straight again, 400,000 francs. As soon as I laid the whole matter before M. Cottier, and showed the receipts for arms at various arsenals, he replied that the sum was at my disposal. I was very much flattered at the trust displayed by this excellent man, who was esteemed by the whole Paris Exchange in a very different way from Fould or the Rothschilds. Sometimes, in going away, he would cry over the counter, "Don't speak of it. In spite of our reputation for great prudence, it might injure us, if it were known that we had made such large advances to a man whose fortune is not yet made." Or again, "The fact is, all goes on well, and to our satisfaction, when you are there. But if anything should happen to you, where would we be! Everybody can't stand in your shoes." I trust to be pardoned for this exhibition of vanity. Had I not the intimate conviction that, despite many errors and faults, I have never had cause to blush for myself, and that I have never betrayed a trust, my present existence would be a heavy burden to me. So that retrospection still brings me some consolation.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE CONSPIRACY OF THE RUE DES PROUVAIRES—

My contracts and deliveries of arms lead to its discovery—The sub-contractor and intermediary, Darmenon—Disclosure of the plot to the Police Prefect, Gisquet—Arrest of the conspirators in the Rue des Prouvaires, in the evening of Feb. 2d, by Carlier, the last Prefect of the Police under the Republic—The trial in the assizes for the department of the Seine—My testimony—Opposition of the Prefect—The decision—Ambiguous conduct of the Prefect—The disclosure of his venality leads to his dismissal.

THE traffic in old worn-out muskets, that had found their way into the ware-rooms and shop-shelves of the Parisian frippery dealers, rendered it necessary to get spies, from the worthless frequenters of such places, in order to get possession of the arms. The under functionaries of the artillery department had certain protégés whom I could use for this purpose. In December, 1831, I was accosted on the first staircase of the artillery dépôt, Rue Luxembourg, by a man, whose evasive manner and unsteady eye did not prepossess me in his favor, and who offered me his services in the purchase of arms. I merely answered, that if he could point out the spot where any old arms were to be found, he might tell me of it. I would send some one to see them, and if they were good for anything, we could soon strike a bargain. This took place, and the purchase of several small lots of muskets brought me to frequent speech with the man, whose name was Darmenon. His unsteady manner had convinced me that he must have done something which would not bear daylight. I inquired at the police, and learned that he was an ex-galley slave, who, for the last four years since the expiration of his term, had been living honestly. In his youth he had been in a counting-house, in Lyons.

where he had forged a draft, for which he was sent, under the *Code Napoléon* to the galleys. It is generally known that these slaves are cut off from all communication with the world; and that they live chained together in couples; a man, not very evil may thus be forcibly joined for years to the greatest scoundrel on earth; so that the usual result is, that a fellow comes out of the galleys much worse than when he went in. Even when one comes out with some honesty left in him, it is difficult, or even impossible, to find, after so long absence from the world, an honest way of making a living or even a lodging. For what host is willing to receive as guest a man whose passport bears the words "freed galley-slave," which will oblige him to notify the police? Or who will sit at table with a "freed galley-slave?" As I have always felt an involuntary pity for these outcasts, and knew how hard it was for them to get employment, I could not but feel for Darmenon's wretchedness, nor could I close my door upon him. He had made himself useful to me, also, and kept me informed of all that was said politically in those troublous times, in the shops of the faubourg St. Antoine. From him and other spies I learned what old arms had passed the various barriers at daybreak—whither they had been carried, etc. The quantity seldom surpassed 100 to 150 muskets at a time. One morning, however, Darmenon informed me that 2600 muskets had passed the barrière St. Denis, and were taken to the faubourg of the same name, where so much illegal business goes on. I went immediately to the chief of division, T. de L——, and he procured an order from the marshal to purchase the muskets at any price. I bought them, but not without rivalry, nor was I without a suspicion that this was no mere second-hand dealer's affair. I inquired, and found that my rivals were the agents of the legitimists, who were then very busy in the faubourg St. Denis. During other small purchases in this way, I heard that the legitimists were in the field, and that something unusual was going on. That these gentlemen really had a hope of overthrowing the government appeared to me impossible. However, I did not trust to appearances, but instructed Darmenon to keep his eyes open, and to bring me all the news he could collect. Everything remained in this condition



all the month of January, 1832. I kept my own counsel—for looking upon the scheme as absurd, I saw no use in talking about it. On the first of February, however, Darmenon came to tell me that several legitimists were gathered in the faubourg St. Antoine, in expectation of a mass of workmen, about 12 o'clock, to plant the standard of Henri V., and that the plot was to be organized at 1 o'clock, in a house in the Rue de Saussayes. He further told me that conspirators would leave the house, 18 Rue de Prouvaires at 10 P. M., with a view to go to the Tuileries, where a ball was to take place, and there suddenly to surround and carry off Louis Philippe, trusting that the confusion caused by their entrance would render the exploit an easy one. I was amazed, and asked Darmenon how he had learned so much in so short a time. He said that he had been dealing with these gentlemen for some time, but had not told me, because I would have taken it as a hoax. Now, however, that the matter was earnest, he had thought it his duty to inform me. I asked him for the leaders' names. He read, from his pocket-book, Poncelot, Gechter, Montholon, and others. Finally, he said that he had been offered 6000 francs for 200 muskets, and that this would be a good opportunity for me to get rid of some worthless and unsaleable arms in my possession. I sent him away, with directions to return so soon as he had touched the 6000 francs. I lived then at 48 Rue Basse des Ramparts, and as soon as he had gone, I went to Rue de Saussayes, and examined from the other side of the street the house No. 23. The window-shutters were all closed. From time to time, four or five suspicious looking fellows would appear, and slip into the house, amounting to about 20, in the course of half an hour. I now saw that Darmenon's representations were correct, and went home. He soon came in, with 2000 francs, as earnest money. I now determined to lay the whole matter before the prefect of police, Gisquet, whom I knew personally, and with whose former firm, Gisquet and Brunet, in Havre, I had once been closely connected. I took Darmenon with me. On my way, as it was exchange hour, I determined to cross Exchange Place, to learn what influence the various reports had upon State paper. I heard of a sudden fall of 1 franc 50 cts., in

the 3 per cents, which was attributed to the heavy sales made by the legitimists, particularly those of the faubourg St. Germain. I found M. Gisquet, and told him all. He listened carelessly, and said that he had heard exactly such information two or three times, and yet there had been no result—he believed, then, there would be none this time. I then asked whether the 2000 francs in Darmenon's pocket-book went for nothing. He said yes, but not for much. When I mentioned the sudden fall in State stock, he laughed, and said he knew the cause of the fall—that Ouvrard, from La Hague, was attempting to dupe the people again. I rose to go, when he called back Darmenon, took down the numbers of the two houses, and the names of eighteen conspirators. He then left us, after politely thanking me for what he called my perfectly *useless* information.

About 7 o'clock, P. M., Darmenon came to my counting-room, and showed me 6000 francs, in notes of 1000 each, asking if I would give him 200 muskets for that sum, and deliver them about 10 o'clock. I promised him an answer at 9 o'clock. I sent him off, and went at once to the prefect, to whom I said that Darmenon had now the 6000 francs, and I asked whether I should deliver the arms, if they were called for at 10 o'clock, P. M. The answer was "Deliver, but in small quantities—I will have them followed." I went to the house No. 32 Rue Basse des Ramparts, where I had a small warehouse for the reception of the daily arriving muskets, and instructed the guardian to deliver to Darmenon, on my written order, 30 or 40 muskets, in small lots. He told me the next morning that Darmenon had carried off 17 muskets, and had been arrested on his return for more. The morning papers, Feb. 2, contained the news that M. Carlier, chief of municipal police, had, about 11 o'clock, surrounded the house No. 18 Rue de Provaires, and had succeeded in capturing the whole band, after a strong resistance, in which he had been wounded in the head, and a municipal guard killed.

The affair came before the first section of the Assize Court of the Seine, by which I was subpœnaed, together with a motley collection of 329 others. On this occasion the true character of two persons came to light, Darmenon and Gisquet himself. Both lied

hard, and both suffered by it. That Darmon appeared as a common intriguer of the lowest class of Paris is not wonderful, but the Prefect Gisquet, soon after lost all credit at court and in the city, was stricken from the list of State Councillors, and expelled from his prefecture. The democrats alleged that he himself had arranged the whole matter, and had provoked the conspiracy by his agents, simply in order to win for himself credit for great vigilance; and he had great difficulty in disproving the charge. The prosecutor laid great weight upon the circumstance that the prefect had allowed me to deliver some muskets. The advocate of the accused questioned me about it, and I said what is already told above. Whereupon the Prefect was sent for, and appeared in full uniform, and was requested to take a seat. The Chief Justice then said that the Prefect had already appeared as witness for M. Poncelot, but that he must now again submit to examination, and must tell the truth, although an oath would not be exacted from him. The Prefect expressed great respect for the Court, but he must beg his lordship to remark, that he was not establishing, by his obedience, a precedent by which prosecutor or accused might annoy and derange the Prefect of Police at their pleasure. This impertinent answer caused a long murmur among the advocates. The Prefect had fancied himself powerful enough to insult the whole Parisian bar. After his general testimony came what had passed between us, and he denied that he had authorized the delivery of arms. "I swear," he said, stretching out his hand—"I swear by my honor, that I gave no such permission." This was so exactly in opposition to my sworn testimony, that the Judge called me back for re-examination. I confessed that I might have misunderstood the Prefect, but that, to the best of my knowledge and recollection, my testimony was precisely true. I could do nothing further, and so went home, convinced that Gisquet, who had given his honor to a lie, was like most other Frenchmen, and held the word of honor very lightly. How hard it was for the Prefect to clear himself of suspicion the end will show. Only a portion of the accused were tried here; the rest were sent before the Court of the Seine and Oise, then sitting at Versailles, to be judged where they were born. I was subpœ-



naed there, but before the court opened, Carlier—the same who had arrested the men in the Rue des Prouvaires, and who was Prefect of Police for a while under Louis Napoleon—Carlier came to me, and begged me to free the Prefect, who liked me very much, from his “embarrassment,” by saying nothing about the permission to deliver the arms. As I had modified my statement as much as my conscience would permit me; I said to M. Carlier that I would say nothing if I were not asked; but that, if questioned, I could conceal nothing. Fortunately for M. le Prefect the question was not asked.

The whole number of accused amounted to 66, of whom only 56 were arrested. These were accused of a complot to overthrow the government, and of arming the citizens and exciting them to civil war. The court sate daily from the 4th to the 12th of July, and charged the jury to give their attention to two points; first, to the plot itself, and second to the part taken in it by each of the accused. The jury acquitted 28, and found 28 more or less guilty. The sentenced were as follows:

6, among whom was Poncelet, transportation for life.

13, five years imprisonment, and to be watched by the police for life.

4, two years imprisonment, and to be watched for two years.

5, one year in prison, one year under eye of police.

The plot was conceived by the advocate Gechter, and led by a ranger of Marshal Bourmont. These two received the second punishment.

After the process was over, M. Gisquet thanked me for my retention, and declared that, in fact, he had thought lightly of the matter, until I had taken Darmon to him, at 8 o'clock, P. M. Later he said, after he had given me permission to deliver the arms, he was in great doubt what course to take. His words were, “To arrest those men will be to make all to-morrow’s newspapers cry out.” Carlier put an end to his indecision, by saying, “They are armed, but we are superior in numbers—we must enter the house and kill.” In an hour this was done, and Carlier, as before said, wounded.

The ministry of the interior was then in the hands of M. Thiers,

Marshal Soult being president of the cabinet. These two were jealous of, and unfriendly towards each other; the marshal often declared that he hated all quill-drivers; and Thiers had never renounced the pleasure of saying in society something about the marshal's orthography. As Minister of the Interior, it fell to him, on the discovery of this complot, to exercise a peculiar vigilance over the person of the king; and when Marshal Soult learned that one of his providers had discovered the plot, he was displeased that I had not come to him instead of going to the Prefect. I learned this the next day from T. de L——, who said to me, "You will see that the entire merit of the discovery will be for M. Gisquet." In fact, Gisquet soon after received the cross of officer, and Carlier the cross of member of the Legion of Honor.

Two years after losing his prefecture, Gisquet published his memoirs, in which he gives the history of the plot, describes his own vigilance and its happy results, and does me the honor not to say a word about me. The object of these memoirs was to apologize for his administration as prefect; but the true cause of his fall was his gross venality, and a scandalous intrigue with the wife of an intimate friend, by name of Foucault. Gisquet's correspondence with the lady fell into the hands of the husband, who bravely published it in *Le Messager*. This step of Foucault brought less dishonor upon Gisquet than upon himself, through his publication of his wife's shame.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### REMINISCENCES OF THE ARTIST WORLD OF PARIS.—PAUL DELAROCHE—

His complete establishment in his profession, by his picture, "The Beheading of Lady Jane Grey"—Universal impression produced by the picture—The cholera in Paris in the summer of 1832—Delaroche's contract with M. Thiers, then Minister of the Interior, for the decoration of the walls of the Madeleine—He goes to Rome, to complete the preparatory studies—Thiers breaks his word, and thus occasions the abandonment of the contract and Delaroche's return to Paris—His enviers and deprecators, and his demeanor towards them—The painter Charlet—An anecdote concerning him—A piece of experience and information from the *monde galant* of Paris enables me to give him a hint that I had got a peep at his cards, and had made out his game—Some sketchy remarks concerning the Coryphæi of the Paris school, such as Horace Vernet, Ingres, Delacroix, Decamps, Ary Scheffer, and others.

THE regular course of my business in 1832, and most of 1833, gave me leisure to cultivate the acquaintance of some of the best artists. First of all was Paul Delaroche, who has won for himself the title of the greatest historical painter of the age. His real Christian name is Jean Baptiste, but his school-fellows used to call him, from his size, "little Paul," and he took the name, and gave it to his first pictures. I visited him often, talked with him for hours, and envied his quiet, self-contained life, when I contrasted it with my troublous existence, and looked back to the time when my own taste called me to become a painter, and promised me greater plenty of happiness and usefulness than my pen-strifes and accountings had ever won. Born in the second fatherland of art, accustomed from childhood to the works of the noblest masters, I seldom erred in my appreciation of a picture,



and Delaroche listened to my remarks with pleasure. To please me, he had made a water-color drawing of his celebrated "Sons of Edward," in the Luxembourg gallery, and had presented me with a picture called "The beheading of Lady Jane Grey." It was a sketch, but so moving, that all who saw it at my house experienced the same feeling. I wanted Delaroche to paint it in life size, and at last he consented. Madame de Montaut was one of the usual visitors at his studio. She was born Duchesse de la Rochefoucauld, and was the intimate friend of the Prince Paul Demidoff, who afterwards married the Princesse Mathilde Bonaparte, daughter of the King of Westphalia. She possessed influence enough with this gentleman to induce him to buy the picture for 8000 francs, which was 2000 more than Horace Vernet had received for his greatest pictures, even for "The Pope carried to St. Peter's by the Swiss Guard," and "The Pope, Michael Angelo, and Raphael, on the porch of the Vatican." As the picture drew near its completion, the wild enthusiasm of all who saw it awakened a sort of sorrow in Delaroche, that he had sold it for 8000 francs; but the bargain was made. Madame de Montaut undertook to influence Demidoff, who was prudent in his extravagance, to a higher offer; and it was determined that I should get from the art dealers, Rittner & Goupil, Rue Montmartre, a letter, as if from an English capitalist, offering 15,000 francs, and requesting me to lay the offer before my friend. The letter came to my hands, from which it passed through Delaroche's, to those of Madame de Moutant, and thus to Demidoff's, who at once sent to Delaroche 12,000 francs, because the picture so much surpassed his expectation; and in this way it was paid for, at 50 per cent. above the original price.

From this moment Delaroche's pictures rose in price. Lord Francis Egerton, now Earl of Ellesmere, brother of the Duke of Sutherland, declared himself ready to pay Delaroche 35,000 francs for a picture of the arrest of Charles I. by the soldiery of Cromwell, which is now in the Bridgewater gallery. In 1832, while the cholera was raging so awfully in Paris, that for weeks the daily list of deaths was 900, and on one day 1000, everybody who could, left the capital; and Delaroche's elder brother, who

was a director of the Mont de Piété, wrote to me that he was in the greatest danger ; all his art friends had quitted Paris, and he needed 8000 francs to get him out of the greatest embarrassment. I was repaid at the end of the year : again, as in Lafayette's case, without requiring a receipt. Why did I need it. Had he died, his acknowledgment would have done me no good ; if he lived, it was useless. Say the French, "An honest man's word is better than a scoundrel's money." I was glad to be able to help not only my friend Delaroche, but other artists, with whom I lived on intimate terms. Only one, to whom I had advanced the sum of 200 francs for a water-color picture, failed in his engagement. He sold the picture, and four years after paid back the 200 francs.

Paul Delaroche is a noble man, who perfectly understands his worth as an artist, and keeps his word as a man ; and never at any time, or for any reason, would he trifle with his promise. The raising of the price of his "Lady Jane Grey," through Madame de Montaut, cannot be cited here against him, for he had nothing to do with it ; and although he knew the manner in which it was done, he did not help, but only tolerate. Who could blame him, especially with a man like Demidoff, who never knew shame, who was ready for the foulest tricks, and who never listened to the voice of justice. What a frightful picture of moral depravity would the secret history of this favorite of fortune exhibit. His veins were full of Cossack blood ; and he respected even the sex of women so little, as to have used the knout, both to Madame de Montaut and to his wife the princess Mathilde. Madame de Montaut knew him thoroughly, and was sure that his purse-pride was almost beyond hearing any reason. The following will show Delaroche in his true light. M. Thiers, Minister of the Interior, determined to have the church of la Madeleine completed, and the side walls covered by six grand pictures, representing scenes in the life of St. Mary Magdalen. He wisely sought Delaroche, stipulated to pay him 25,000 francs for each picture, and 25,000 francs more for a voyage to Italy, there to make studies, and procure models, which were not to be found amid the Savoyard physiognomies, or the forms of the Parisians. In this agreement one point remained unsettled, the finishing of

the Hemicycle which should connect the two walls, and about which the minister could not decide, whether it should be painted or sculptured in wood. Delaroche very properly held, that if painted it must be by the same hand that should paint the side walls, since another artist would have quite another idea of the Magdalen. On the minister asking, what would be the price of this last picture, he replied, "Nothing." He had nothing further in view than to get the preference as painter, and he left the price to the minister's own sense of propriety. M. Thiers agreed. Delaroche received the first 25,000 francs, and went to Rome, where I saw him again early in 1835. During a visit to his studio, where I saw rows of exquisite sketches, studies, and drawings for the painting of the Madeleine, he received a letter from a protectress and friend of his, Madame Dosne, mother-in-law of M. Thiers, informing him that the minister had determined to have the hemicycle painted, and to give it to the painter Flandin. She had done what she could against this, but in vain. Delaroche at once wrote to Thiers, that he would return the 25,000 francs received as soon as he arrived in Paris, whither he determined to go at once, and that their contract was at an end. The Marquis of Montemart, who was present, another friend, and myself endeavored to dissuade him from this course, but in vain. He left us for a quarter of an hour, and then brought in his answer, worded with all the bitterness of a wounded artist spirit. Nor would he change or soften one expression. "M. Thiers," said he, "must learn with whom he is dealing; that I am a man of honor, and not a mountebank like himself."

The envy of his brother artists rose to its height during the exhibition of his "Beheading of Lady Jane Grey." Delacroix, the two Boulangers, Champmartin, and others, formed a clique, who devoted themselves to his overthrow from the height which he had won so lightly. These gentlemen, who had themselves praised the picture to Delaroche, usually met at the Sunday receptions of Madame de Mirbel, the celebrated miniature painter of the faubourg St. Germain, where the bitterest criticism was allowed, and where gall flowed freely. Madame de Mirbel's rule was to be on friendly terms with all the notable historic painters,



that these might suggest her name to all their friends who might be in want of miniatures. She had invited Delaroche, but he had hitherto neglected the invitation. One morning I told him of the gossip which went on about him in the drawing-rooms of this lady, and told him he should go there himself, and see and hear what was going on with reference to himself. "Not bad advice," he said, "I think I will go next Sunday." Accordingly, to the great astonishment of all, he made his appearance. Madame de Mirbel almost fell upon her knees, and seemed utterly confounded at the honor. After half an hour's stay he took leave of the lady, who, surrounded by her satellites, accompanied him to the door, saying, "Ah! M. Delaroche, why go so soon?" His answer was, "Pardon me, Madame, I have accomplished a double object in coming here this evening. First, I came to pay my respects to you; then, as I am busied with a picture, in which Hypocrisy and Dissimulation are to appear, I needed some studies of heads, and—(looking round upon the painters)—I have succeeded perfectly; I have found them: Madame, I have the honor to wish you good night!"

Super-eminent talent is, unfortunately, hated and envied. Delaroche was almost isolated in the world of art. He had but two friends among the painters, his old master, the celebrated Ingres, and Eugene Lami, painter of horses, battle-pieces, and hunts. I had taken his red and black crayon sketches of the murder of the Duc de Guise, with me to Rome, where I showed them to several illustrious artists, who almost unanimously attributed their origin to the days of Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and others. No one in France approaches the correctness of his drawings, not even Ingres. A peculiarity of my friend is his extraordinary resemblance, in head and features, to Napoleon—of course I mean Napoleon I. Since the early death of his wife, only daughter of the world-famous Horace Vernet, he has lived much retired, and only for his two children. The great painting in the Paris Academy of Fine Arts, in which he has brought together all known schools, is the most perfect work of his pencil, or of our time.

Of the other painters of the capital whom I saw about me, I liked the genial Charlet best, although I had little taste for his

associations and habits. He had no manners at all, and painted almost exclusively scenes from the pot-houses and barracks, in which he spent his time. He knew very well how to catch the spirit, and embody in his aquarelles the humor, of the lower classes, *ouvriers*, *invalides*, and other frequenters of the wine-shops at the Barriers. He had seen Napoleon several times in his youth, and the image of the Emperor was so strongly impressed upon his mind, that he could draw him with his eyes closed. He has frequently done this for me, once asking where he should begin. "At the heel of the right boot," I said. He did so, and drew the whole figure perfectly well.

Charlet was always determined to get the highest price for his productions, and adopted the method that we had taken to elevate the price of the "Lady Jane Grey;" only in Delaroche's case it was the exception, while it was Charlet's rule. One day, at the door of a court in the rue Vaugirad, in the Faubourg St. Germain, where Charlet's studio was, one of his young scholars saw me getting out of my cabriolet, and, guessing that I was come to see about an aquarelle, ran in before me to announce my arrival. I found Charlet just in the act of finishing a drawing, and near him, on a green-baize-covered desk, was a 500 francs bank-note, stuck fast with a pin. "What are you doing there?" said I, as I came in. "You see," said Charlet, "and you see what Durand (an art dealer) has offered me for it." "And you did not accept it!" "No; I perceive that my designs are the rage just now, and I expect to get more for it." "Well," I said, "I think it well paid for at 500 francs." Our conversation ended here, and Charlet's face fell somewhat. I went from his studio to Durand's place, *rue neuve des Petits Champs*. "What is the news?" was my first question. "Nothing." "Have you seen Charlet lately?" "No, not for a week." I then told him that I had seen a drawing at Charlet's, which I had made no offer for, as the artist held it rather too high. "But," said I, "if you can get it for 200 or 250 francs, you may get it for me." About two hours afterwards he brought me the aquarelle. "What did you pay for it?" I asked. "200 francs," he answered, "but its price to you is 250." I was annoyed at this; for I had done Charlet certain services, and had no

idea that he would attempt such a trick on me. I thought of some little punishment for him, and found the way in my reminiscences of 1819-20. Here I must interrupt the chronological course of my narrative, and take the reader back some thirteen years.

In the winter of 1819-20, that part of the Parisian female world, then known as "*femmes galantes*," and now as *Lorettes*, had reached its zenith. After the example of the Duke de Berry, all the notabilities, foreign and native, formed *liaisons* with these ladies. The example spread, and I was not exempt from its influence. Very lofty intellectuality was not expected from these ladies, but they possessed a very agreeable society intelligence, and good enough manners acquired from their association with people of haut-ton; they conversed well, and had plenty of frivolous amiability, and offered to the stranger a sort of society which was agreeable when one had nothing better. At this time the great opera dancer, Coulon, was giving his Sunday evening *soirées dansantes*, tickets to which had to be earnestly begged for, besides costing 40 francs. The men of these *soirées* consisted of the foreign and domestic diplomats, the great financiers, as Baron James Rothschild, and illustrious strangers of all sorts. The ladies had all the greatest dancers of the opera, Fanny Bias, Bigottini, Noblet, La Gallois and others, in elegant but very simple toilette, and the better class of *femmes galantes*, who usually came in domino to intrigue the better. The opera dancers commenced a quadrille, in which they exhibited all the propriety of ladies *du grand monde*; then followed occasional other quadrilles; waltzes and hop-waltzes were scarcely thought of, and polkas did not exist.

At one of the *soirées*, a tender mask took my arm, and walked about the room with me, chattering gaily with French frivolity. She would not allow me to lift her mask, but promised to do so, if I would visit her the next day at 2 o'clock, at her own apartments, of which she gave me the address. Of course I went, and was allowed to wait for sometime in an elegant ante-chamber, but was at length introduced by a pert, freely dressed waiting maid into the boudoir of the lady. She rose from the sofa, and addressing me as an old acquaintance, offered her hand. I recognized her as a



Parisian beauty whom I had often seen in an elegant equipage, and who was known for her remarkable beauty as the *Perle de Paris*. She told me that her *liaison* with the Russian Prince R——, was broken by his recall, and that she was now free as air. Of course I offered to play the Prince's part in the comedy, and we lived very amicably, although at considerable expense, for three months together. One day the queen of my heart came to me and begged for five hundred francs, or as she phrased it, "a little billet." "There is some contrast," said I, "between the *little* billet and the *great* want that you express. It is a good deal of money for ——" I stopped, and she continued. "For a fidelity like mine, eh! It is not enough, sir." "Oh," I replied, "I know the song in the Caliph of Bagdad,

'Je vous serais fidèle comme on l'est à Paris.'

Parisian fidelity! we all know what that is worth a yard." Meantime, Madame got the bank note, and the same evening we went to the opera. Two ranges from us, I observed a large, well-formed man of ripe age, fixing his opera-glass steadily on my companion. "It is the Duc de Vauguyon," (a court favorite), said she to me. "He has been madly in love with me for two years, but I will have nothing to do with him." After the opera we went home. The next moment, shortly after reaching my lodgings, the waiting-maid brought me the following note,

MON CHER AMI:—Last night you seemed to doubt my fidelity. I am now going to prove it by asking you to read the enclosed note. I trust that it will convince you, for I intend to send it and its enclosure back to the Duke. Meanwhile, I embrace you, as I love you,

NINA.

The enclosed letter was from the Duke, and told her that she had appeared so deliciously handsome at the opera, that he begged leave to offer two notes of 500 francs each, for a single night with her. In one of these notes I recognized the one I had given her the day before. My ideas upon this discovery can be guessed at. Of course I was convinced of the value of Parisian *fidelity*.

I now return to my starting point, the picture of Charlet, which Durand had bought me. Some days after, I went back to Charlet's, but did not ask about the picture that he had shown me. We talked of things in general. After I had gradually turned the conversation upon the *monde galant*, I told him the above written anecdote. During its close he became suddenly serious, and looked at me with a look that I can never forget; there was a sort of malicious, cat-like repentance in it; he saw that he had been discovered, and that I was telling him a case parallel with his own.

All this was twenty years ago. The position and progress of the French schools of Art were very little known in Germany. Here and there people had heard generally of Horace Vernet, but he was first remarked and esteemed by the German world of art when he became Director of the French Academy, in Rome, where the young German art students first became acquainted with him, and with the vividness and grandeur of his varied creations. The most amazing peculiarity of this rare genius was the fidelity to nature, and the extraordinary truth of whatsoever came from his pencil. In all his works, even in the most unimportant, one is convinced that the subject is perfectly reproduced; even the least details seizable by the eye of the common observer, are faithfully re-given. This is the case with all his pictures, but his pure creative powers are not so frequently displayed. Only one of his works now in the Luxembourg Gallery would belong to this last category, were it not that we know its source. I mean Judith beheading Holofernes. Both heads are portraits. Judith was a Jewess, named Pelissier, then Vernet's mistress, and who served him long as a model; she then became Rossini's mistress, in Bologna, and after Madame Colbran's death, his wife. The drunken head of Holofernes, sunk amid the pillows, is a portrait of Colonel La Boulaye, Vernet's table friend, and a terrible drinker. Vernet, it is said, placed him in the position given in the picture; also placed his mistress with an Asiatic sabre in her hand, in her relative position, and so sketched them. The picture was placed in the following exposition, and La Boulaye was universally recognized. The artist and the Colonel

had been great friends, but this severed them. I, who had become acquainted with la Boulaye, as with many others, at the *Cercle Français*, on the Boulevard Montmartre, never saw him in the neighborhood of the picture without noticing his furious look, and I agreed with others who thought that which had been intended as a painter's license was in reality falsehood towards a friend, and too serious for a jest. The vulgarest brutality of a drunken bandit is the expression of this open-mouthed Holofernes.

Horace Vernet, introduced by the Bourbons, advanced by Louis Philippe and his princes, especially loved and immensely paid by Charles Albert of Sardinia, the emperor Nicholas, and other potentates, was a very eccentric fellow. I saw him in Rome in 1835. And it was thought odd, that he, no longer a young man, and director of so serious a school of art as the French Academy at Rome, should so far forget his age and position as to dance mazurkas at the balls of the English gentry then in the Eternal City. This was more remarked because his predecessor Ingres had erred a little on the side of pedantry, and had a certain still solemnity of manner, on which very account, perhaps, he was esteemed a greater artist than him whom the English called "a capering Frenchman."

An anecdote of Vernet may illustrate his eccentricity. He was in Marshal Bugeaud's camp just before the battle of Isly, the picture of which won him so much reputation, and here his presence was generally known among the common soldiers. One of these warriors wanted to send his portrait to his mother, and asked Vernet if he would undertake the job, and at what price. Vernet accepted, but declared his inability to paint it for less than twenty francs. The soldier thought it rather high, but accepted on condition that the resemblance should be perfect. When finished, it was exposed to the man's comrades, and as their approval was unanimous, he paid the price, which Vernet pocketed, saying, "the artist must live by his pay." A couple of days afterward, on leaving the camp, he sent twenty Napoleons to the captain of the company, to be given to the soldier and his comrades.

Immediately next to Vernet, or, as many think, far above him



comes Ingres, who first rose into fame by painting a ceiling in the Louvre, "the gods of Olympus." His reputation was based upon the remarkable correctness of his drawing, in which he was only surpassed by Delaroche. His coloring is without life: the perfection of his painting, the labor of five years is his *Stratonice*, purchased by the last duke of Orleans for 12,000 francs, and recently sold for 52,000. The *Odalisque*, in the collection of M. de Pourtales, is perhaps his best work, but his *St. Symphosien*, although it received nearly as much praise as the "Beheading of Lady Jane Grey," in the exhibition of 1832, is a failure. In this uninteresting scene from the life of a saint, Ingres has been mainly occupied in exhibiting his power of foreshortening, and has painted a Roman proconsul on horseback, at the moment when he is pointing his finger at the spectator; so that the finger is foreshortened from its point back. In this lies its "main attraction," as the work caused by the drawing of this, prevents critical attention to the rest of the picture.

Color is the weak point of Ingres; it has no warmth. Like our German Overbeck, he believes that Raphael's second manner is the best and only school for the painter, but in coloring he remains far, far behind his master. Delaroche learned this peculiarity from his master, and then began to choose from various tints, preferring for his portraits a violet, as in Sontag's portrait, as Donna Anna in *Don Juan*, and at last nearing the perfections of Raphael's third and last manner, the manner in which the *Fornarina*, Pope Julius II., and the *Transfiguration* are painted.

As draughtsmen, all other noted artists of the French school come behind Vernet, Delaroche and Ingres; but, as colorists, come three names, Eugène Delacroix, Decamps and Roqueplan, and throw all others into the shade. The first, by a delicious blending of color, and by the wildness of his fancy, won the hearts of many writers on art; for instance, that critic so full of gall and mockery, Theophile Gautier, who, with some others, had formed an art coterie for the purpose of destroying Delaroche and deifying Delacroix. Delacroix has produced some superb works, as for instance, "the Women of Algiers," but he would soon be recog-

nized at his true value, were it not for the flourish of trumpets kept up by the art-clique above mentioned.

Shut out from this confederation, living still and alone in his fourth story, where the unfortunate duke of Orleans frequently visited him, almost without an idea of what correct drawing is, Decamps has produced the rarest and most various works of art, and has entirely surpassed all his companions in coloring. His "Coming Home from School in Cairo:" his "Battle of the Cimbri:" his "Dog and Ape pieces," on the Boulevard du Temple, are perfect master-pieces—in all lies a power, a vitality, a reality which completely captivates the spectator. The commonest man stands before his pictures in the window of a shop whether they represent a Savoyard with his organ, or a spring in an Egyptian wood. All the productions of his pencil have a magical, inexplicable attraction.

Camille Roqueplan is far from the greatest of these artists, but as colorist and tasteful painter of pleasant, though unimportant, life pieces—as Rousseau, the two ladies crossing a brook on their asses, and such scenes, he has won a deserved reputation.

Eugene Isabey, Bellanger, Gudin and other great men of the French school, need no mention here: they are known and prized in Germany: but I must record one name of German origin in proof of the creative art of the Germans, and because he is full of poetry—this name is Ary Sheffer; Goethe's Margaret returning from the well, and countless pictures of like nature have insured him a great and well merited celebrity.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CLOSING SCENES AND RESULTS OF MY DELIVERY OF ARMS.

A secret canker at work—The undermining of my prosperity by the puerilities of those engaged with me in the business—Loss of an important suit in the Tribunal of Commerce at Paris—I grasp at a straw—The scheme for the conversion of the Roman 5 per cent. Rentes takes me to Rome—My visit to Italy, after an absence of 38 years—Florence—Rome—The aged Duchess Torlonia—Chiaveri, her son by her first marriage—The Tyrolese Stolz, Secretary of the Papal Treasurer, Monsignor Tosti—My chance-meeting with Ouvrard, in the Villa Borghese—My return to France, by way of Leghorn, my birthplace—Another meeting, of an unusual kind, with an old friend—The beauty of the Villa Pandolfini—Disconsolate circumstances and prospects—Lack of profitable business in Paris.

I HAD been ordered by the government to procure 400,000 stand of arms, viz., 50,000 old at 28 francs, and 350,000 new at 32 francs. Early in 1833, I saw that it was impossible to supply all, and I thought myself lucky when one of my assistants obtained from St. Quentin & Co., Paris, a contract to furnish 100,000 muskets, for 50,000 francs. There was no difficulty in substituting these gentlemen, at least from the war ministry; but the sharper who had arranged the affair, and who had gotten possession of the certificate of substitution, managed by some means to get and appropriate to himself 30,000 francs out of the stipulated sum. The worthless fellow kept clear of me for some time. At the ministry of war I learned that they had given him the certificate, and from St. Quentin, that on this certificate they had paid him 30,000 francs on account; that he had not demanded the other 20,000, which were now at my disposal. When I asked with wonder how they could pay him such a sum without authority, I was told that he was my partner in the business. I might have answered St. Quentin—what would have led to a lawsuit and



been published all over Paris—that my associate was an infernal scoundrel. The consequences of such publicity would be the end of my business, as any contractor, whose affairs get into court, is at once shut out from all further contracts, and if he have one at the time, it is considered as ended. I had already learned that, in France, any associate in such a contract is free to sell a share of it without consulting the original contractor, and the purchaser, entering into all the rights of his predecessor, can institute an examination of the state of affairs at any moment. I had never thought of the possible introduction of third and fourth parties into a business which required so much secrecy. I found myself surrounded by rogues, who used me at their will, sucking at my purse like leeches, and threatening me with legal procedures, and who brought me at last to the resolve to shrink from nothing that would rid me of them at once and forever. The weight of all this can scarcely be made comprehensible to the reader; he will remember, however, that I had a contract for sabres. Induced by Daly's recommendation, I had given the superintendence of the fabrication of sabres to O——, already named. He showed me contracts, which I could not guess, as I afterwards discovered, were made with men who had failed, who had neither material, tools, workmen, nor so much as an empty workshop. I made advances upon these contracts, and before I went to Marseilles to close the concern there and bring my family back to Paris, those advances had amounted to 63,000 francs. Immediately on my return, I asked for O——'s accounts, and received empty words. Not a sabre could he show me, but he was abundant in excuses for the delay. At last, though too late, in order to get at the bottom of this swindle, I went to the workshop, Faubourg du Temple, found the porter, had it opened, and saw an empty room, in which no man had either lived or worked for at least a year. At the same time I heard that O—— was to be found about the restaurants, on the Boulevard des Italiens, where he spared no expense in giving superb dinners and suppers. Originally of good family in Marseilles, his tendency to dishonesty drove him early to Paris, where he soon became an accomplished member of the society of swindlers there. He had nothing; had had nothing

for years. I only succeeded in annulling our agreement by giving him a receipt for the 63,000 francs, and promising not to expose him.

It will do no good to draw the reader through the labyrinth of embarrassments created for me by this man's comrade G——. It is useless to recall the torture of my troublous days; the anguish of my sleepless nights. Suffice it to say that those days in Paris, which seemed so calm and bright, but really full of secret cancers, were the most unfortunate of my existence. Up to April, 1834, I had no hope of getting over my difficulties, as I had so often done before—but every lapsing minute seemed bringing me nearer to beggary. The only chance I had lay in a draft for 150,000 francs, drawn by the Carlist Junta in Paris upon the bishop of Oviedo, head of the Carlist ministry in London, and accepted by him. This draft had been given to G—— by the Junta in payment of several supplies, and had at last been gotten hold of by my clerk P——, who, thoroughly instructed about G——'s rogueries and cheatings, followed him with jealous vigilance, and at last recovered thus much of my fortune. The draft I delivered to André and Cottier. The Junta soon saw what a sharper they had in G——, whom they had appointed Commissary-General, and thoroughly trusted. They demanded the draft. G—— could not of course return it. A suit, commenced against me as holder, in the Paris Chamber of Commerce, was decided in favor of the President of the Junta, not only on the ground—that I had given no value, and that G—— had received it on account and must remain my debtor for it—but also that G——, in all this business of supply, was notoriously my partner, and that the transfer of the draft from one partner to the credit of another was certainly illegal. This decision overlooks two important points: The one,—that I had dearly purchased a complete separation from G——, years before; and second,—that the draft came into my possession not directly through G——'s endorsement, but through a third person. A letter from G—— confessing his swindling, and saying that he would be unhappy for life if he should not be able to pay most of his debt to me, did not help me. The court had decided, and I lost the suit.

While still in doubt which way to turn, a straw presented itself to me, and like a drowning man I clutched it, vainly hoping that it might save me. An old legitimist, apparently highly honorable, the Count V——, who had spent most of his life in Rome, was now in Paris, for the purpose of inducing the bankers to make a common operation, with a view of changing the debt of the Papal States from 5 into 3 per cents, which appeared easy enough, because of the high price of the 5 per cents, viz., 102 to 104 francs. This was the measure of Monsignor, now Cardinal Tosti, Papal Treasurer. Count V——, had heard of me in Paris, as a man of business, where my arm contracts had gained me some reputation, and came to see me. After setting before me the whole condition of affairs in Rome, showing me his papers and correspondence, and removing all doubt as to Monsignor Tosti's concern in the matter, he came to the feasibility of the projected conversion, and induced me to lay the matter before André & Cottier. The Parisian bankers were, at this time, in peculiar relationship with the Rothschilds. The enormous power possessed by these bankers, not only with the French government but with foreign States, had caused much annoyance to the other great financiers, and six of them determined to unite, and attempt a rivalry with the Rothschilds. These were Jon. Hagerman, André & Cottier, B. A. Fould & Openheim, J. A. Blanc, Colin & Co., Gabriel Odier & Co., and Wells & Co. In the loan asked by the Sardinian government, on the plan of the Paris city lottery, these six had gotten the affair out of the hands of the Rothschilds. Hagerman had been very influential in this matter, from the fact of having established the greatest banking house in Genoa; besides being very intimate with Caccia, the Sardinian minister, and his brother the banker, in Paris. The latter lacked means and influence to carry out his brother's measure, and thus it got into the hands of Hagerman. The Rothschilds, who had forgotten how to suffer rivalry, found this blow strong enough to arouse their vengeance, and they resolved to make it as costly as possible. They procured a fall upon Parisian government paper, which brought down the Sardinian lower than the price contracted for. This shook the confederation of six; but André & Cottier saw so clear



an advantage in the proposed Papal conversion, that after mature deliberation of the league, they resolved to send me to negotiate with the Roman Treasury, and to promise the conversion at 70. I had no written instructions, and, if I came to no result, must pay my own travelling expenses. These terms were rather hard, but as I had no choice, I determined to go. Without full power to treat for these six firms, I was yet obliged to make something of a figure among people who knew nothing of me. Two things helped me. My good friend Lestapis, who had quitted the Hope firm, and lived in Paris, would give me a letter of credit for an important sum on Torlonia & Co.—a sum not to be used, however—and the old Duchess Torlonia, who had had a notorious *penchant* for my father, still lived in Rome. This was all that was necessary for a respectable position in Rome. It was towards the end of November that I set out for the land of my birth, which I had last seen in 1797. Seven and thirty years had gone since I had looked on the world with sanguine feelings, hopes, and expectations; a term of years that had been over-filled with manhood's bitterest experiences. Retrospection was not without its clouds; and, looking forward into the future, all was gloomy.

I went by Geneva and the Simplon to Milan; thence, by Bologna, to Florence. I could not repress my emotions, when, from the heights of the Appenines to Pietramala, the Val d'Arno was seen, with Florence in its bosom. Scarcely arrived, I hastened from the Porta Imperiale out towards the grand ducal summer-palace Poggio Imperiale; then, to the left hand, through the vineyards, towards the village of San Leonardo and the villa Pandolfini. Alone I went, skirting the vineyards, to the door of the villa, which was opened to me by an old peasant woman. I did not know her, but she expressed her willingness to show me the house, and was not a little surprised to find me quite at home throughout it. Tables and chairs were those of thirty-seven years ago; no trace of change was there, but also, no trace of those who once had dwelt there. Then I asked for the inhabitants of the next villa, S——, where my young beauty had resided. All gone, or dead—only the old gardener-ess alive. I went to see her: and after a while, hearing me speak of everybody, she

remembered me. "And your young lady, la Signora Caterina, *dove si trova*, where is she?" "Married, and living in Leghorn."

I returned to the city. Early next morning the post brought me letters; one from Rome, in an unknown hand. It was from the factotum of Count V——, who had preceded me to Rome, and had announced to Cardinal Tosti the approach of an ambassador from the bankers of Paris. The letter said, that soon after his return from Paris, the Count died, but that his death would make no difference in this matter: that the way was open for me, and that I would find it easy to bring matters at once to a close. I immediately left Florence, and on my arrival at Rome went at once to the house of Torlonia & Co., and presented my letter of credit to a gentleman named *Chiaveri*, who was pointed out to me as one of the firm. This was one of the old Duchess Torlonia's sons by her first marriage. He read my letter of credit and introduction attentively, and asked me if I were from Leghorn, and of the family of the former head of the Otto-Frank house, Signor Enrico Nolte. I said yes, I was his son. He then said, that his mother, now eighty years of age, remembered my father very affectionately, and would receive me with much pleasure; he would himself ask permission to introduce me. M. Chiaveri had a terrific squint. The rays of light crossed the point of his nose so exactly that a fly could not have sate thereon. The English in Rome, most of whom had credits with Torlonia, told this anecdote of him. They used to complain of his customary charge of a *scudo* for postage on every letter, large or small, which they were obliged to use in these credits; but they paid it in order to get invited to the splendid balls and parties of the Torlonias. An Englishman, not to be found there, was looked upon as nobody. The unfortunate Queen Caroline, of England, when there, had ordered her secretary and treasurer, Sir William Gell, to draw some money. He wrote the draft in English, and in the usual form—"Pay to —— or bearer." For want of a better word, he used the meaningless one, "*Squintum*," and sent the draft by a Yorkshire servitor to be cashed. When Chiaveri had read the draft, he looked at the man, as if to identify him, and asked, "Are you Squintum?" The poor fellow, amazed at the cross-fire

of those most crooked eyes, replied "No, sir, 'tis more likely you should be the man."

From Torlonia's I went to look up the bosom friend of Count V——, and soon succeeded in finding him. He was a French legitimist, long resident in Rome: his name I have forgotten; but one of the first things he said was, that it was well that it had pleased Heaven to take away the count, who was a great talker, but worth little in action; that he knew nothing of business, and yet would have expected a share in this. I soon discovered that the speaker was quite as ignorant of finance as the count could have been. He desired, meanwhile, to introduce me to Mr. Stolz, a Tyrolean, and private secretary to Monsignor Tosti. As this visit would not take place until the next day, I had time to visit Rome's greatest wonder—one of the greatest on earth—St. Peter's church. I was, like most other travellers, at first deceived, almost disappointed—my ideas of its size were so much vaster than it now appeared. At first, as I have said, it is impossible to grasp the true grandeur of this masterpiece of architecture. It is only when you reach one of the semicircular colonnades, that enclose the space before the church, and see the willows sixty feet in height, and begin to compare heights, that you at all comprehend the immensity of the pile, wherein, for many centuries, artists and laics have met from many lands to wonder, and countless troops of pilgrims come to pray.

In Napoleon's Museum, at Paris, thirty years ago, I had become acquainted with other *chefs-d'œuvre* of art. Laocoon, Apollo Belvidere, the Gladiator, Raphael's transfiguration, and many others. And yet, to use Meinan's words (in Kotzebue's *Menschenhass und Reue*, when he bewails his days of misfortune), "Welcome, old friends, 'tis long since we have met." Four and twenty years had elapsed since I last saw them, and now, what gave me greatest pleasure was, to see them standing there, on the old classic ground, beneath the blue Roman sky, and not afar as trophies of the conqueror.

I found in M. Stolz a very intelligent, well-educated young man, who promised the fixing of an hour for the business that had called me to Rome. I here set before him all the calculations and



combinations which I had made in Paris for the conversion, all of which he quickly comprehended. Then came the question, what guaranty would the Holy See have for the fulfilment of a treaty made with me? I could only say, "The names of the United Paris bankers." And as I was not yet at liberty to mention those names, I added, "These names will no longer remain a secret after the settlement of the contract; and if you are not content, I will be the first to strike a pen through it." I let fall a word about being known at Torlonia's, and M. Stolz was quieted. The reader will understand my position. I had no mission or commission to come to Rome; it was simply a visit at my own risk and cost, and from it might possibly result my being reëstablished in Paris, in that position which I had held so long, and from which I had been ousted by my involuntary and perilous relation with a brace of scoundrels. The bankers of Paris would be quite ready to pick up the fallen fruit, if I should make my voyage successful; and it is also clear, that I could have taken no part in a treaty with the Papal treasury without their definitive sanction. M. Cottier's word for this sanction was, however, enough to induce me to do all I could.

Some days elapsed before M. Stolz was sufficiently instructed about the basis of the conversion, and the means of payment, to lay it before his superior, Monsignor Tosti. At last he succeeded, and told me that the prelate would soon appoint a day to hear me, and give me his decision. I should have enjoyed my leisure in gratifying my love for art, had I been able to forget my own situation, and the uncertainty of my future. But this thought overpowered my tastes, and all I could do was to keep it to myself, *faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu*.

In one of my morning walks through the lordly villa Borghese, I fell suddenly upon M. Ouvrard, whom I had last seen five years before (1830) in great prosperity in Paris. The source of this prosperity was, that he knew of the Polignac Ordinances eight days before they were published. As soon as he felt sure of it he made an arrangement with some Paris bankers and exchange agents, and hastened to London. Here he sold so much French state paper, at constantly falling prices, that the house of Roths-

child, astonished, sought its cause from the first merchants, and for the same purpose sent a courier to Paris. All in vain. Baron James Rothschild, who, a few months before, had negotiated the last governmental loan, by the emission of a 4 per cent. stock, at 102 francs 7 cents, betook himself, on Saturday evening, to Prince Polignac, and asked for light. The possibility of the Ordinance was an exchange rumor, but very uncertain; and when the Baron James left the prince, he did not conceal that the latter had given him his word of honor, that the measure was a mere project, never seriously contemplated, and still but a chimera. But the next day (Sunday, 25th) Charles X. signed the Ordinances, and they were published in the *Moniteur* on Monday. The whole loan of francs, 78,373,750, lay in the hands of the Rothschilds. Ouvrard had, at another time, won a large sum, variously estimated, but which his exchange agent, Arnet, who was also mine, set down at 2,000,000 francs. As soon as he heard of this fortunate combination he returned to London, and leased a whole floor behind the Exchange, near the Hotel de Tours, and furnished it with the utmost luxury. Here exchange agents were left in the antechamber, and directions given to chosen ones, in his private room, for the daily operation in the Exchange. His operations were always *à baisse*; and as the stock, even after Cassimir Perrier's entry into office, fell to 52, and even, in February, 1831, to 48 francs, his extraordinary gains may be imagined—that is, partially, for no one could exactly measure the extraordinary extent of his operations. Since that time I lost sight of him, and heard that his enormous gains had gone to his step-son, Blanchard; and now I met him in the villa Borghese, dressed neatly, but somewhat poorly, and, as I afterwards learned, in great embarrassment. He told me that the affairs of his friend, the wife of Godoy, once Prince of Peace, had drawn him to Rome. He had probably been offered a home by this lady. My feelings may be guessed, as I thought, that I too might be obliged, by my cross fate, to seek a home with somebody; for I saw this man, who at one time, by his mighty and well-practised talent, had more influence in Spanish finance than Godoy himself, who had had 100 tons of

gold at his disposal, a poor old man, but still, in appearance, unbent.

After I had seen and spoken to M. Tosti, my negotiation appeared drawing to a close. Unbroken silence was promised on both sides, but discretion is a rare virtue with papal officers. Something had gotten out about the object of my voyage to Rome, and something was known through the agents whom the Rothschilds kept in their pay in most courts. It was not strange, then, that their house in Naples should get wind of it and send one of their younger partners to Rome. As soon as he learned what had occurred, and the real position of affairs, he produced the original contract of a loan made by his house with Torlonia's at 5 per cent., which contained a, till then, secret clause, binding the Pontifical government to close with no other house without informing the Rothschilds, and then to give them the preference. This earlier loan was made before Monsignor Tosti was in the Finance Department and he was quite ignorant of it. This discovery placed me in the position of one who after ploughing and sowing a field, and seeing the harvest almost ripened, beholds another come and reap the crop. It was then determined to arrange the Conversion, and leave it with the Rothschilds and my confederation in Paris. It was evident that if the affair were a good one, all of these gentlemen could see it, and that the confederates would not be willing to have it taken from them. They notified the Rothschilds that their opposition would throw difficulties in the way of future transactions, from which resulted that nothing better could be done than to have a friendly understanding and participation in all future loans. The result was a mutual understanding.

This ended my sojourn in Rome. I then went by Civita Castellana, Spoleto, Perugia, and Florence, to my birth-place, Leghorn, which I had not seen for eight-and-thirty years, but where I met my brother Henry, who lived in the pleasantest relations with Webb; a book-keeper of the former house of Otto Frank, now ninety years old; the Englishman, Betts, and finally, my beauty of the villa, Pandolfini, now married the second time, and wearing false hair and teeth. Betts, who had for some time been



blind, recognized my voice and called me by name: but the lady, nearly sixty, had studied certain attitudes so as to introduce more effect into her meeting with her youthful adorer; who now, fifty-five years old, was somewhat embarrassed at the sight of the change produced in her by a lapse of forty years. However, both did pretty well, and she showed me a locket containing two braids of hair of different colors. "Guess," she said, with as loving a look as sixty years can give, "where this hair comes from. One braid is my first husband's hair: the other, you must know, is yours." "And did you wear this locket on your neck on your wedding-day?" I asked, with amazement. "Certainly," was the answer. "My first marriage was notoriously a *marriage de convenance*." At this moment, a young man of some five-and-twenty came forward. "But this second," said I, "is, I suppose, a love match." She pressed his hand and said, "Undoubtedly." The lady was a rich widow, the husband a Swiss, with strong calves to his legs, and little money in his purse. How far the "love" of this match was reciprocal, I did not inquire. Probably both saw good reasons for the marriage, and were satisfied.

After a three weeks' visit at Leghorn, I went to Genoa. On the steamer were the former King of Westphalia; the present Prince Jerome, and his niece, Countess Camerata, from Bologna, daughter of Princess Eliza Bacciocchi, Napoleon's sister. The Countess was a great lump of flesh, with her uncle's face, only stupefied. Jerome appeared to me exactly as the history of 1814 has described him, a man whose personal insignificance rendered the dignity he desired naturally impossible. In Genoa, I learned from the popular *Galignani's Messenger*, the sudden death, sad to every philanthropist, of the most promising prince of his time, the Duke of Orleans. I cannot describe my feelings of sorrow, for I knew, as though I had been a Frenchman, what France had lost, as a man, what mankind had lost, and what the future peace of Europe would suffer by this death. I felt in the same way, when in the hall of the Travellers' Club, Pall-Mall, London, I received the news of Canning's death, while expecting to hear that he was better. Every one felt that mankind had lost a friend, and every face was saddened by the news. Four lines from the

"Morning Chronicle" show the public esteem for the extraordinary man who had preceded Sir Robert Peel in his politics, by twenty years. The lines are these :

" What could we hope in other years,  
If the longest life had crowned him?  
But thus to die, with a nation's tears,  
And a world's applause around him."

From Genoa I passed through Milan, Geneva, and Lyons, to Fontainebleau, whither my wife and children had come to meet me, and where, two days after our meeting, the sudden death of my youngest son filled up the measure of my sorrows. In Lyons I had heard of the reunion of the Rothschilds with the six bankers, and I now set out for Paris, almost penniless, without employment, without any views for the future. With the dead body of our son, we rode through the night to Paris. The funeral over, I took rooms for a few weeks in the country, till my wife could make arrangements to quit our present house, lease cheaper apartments, and narrow her ideas of housekeeping. In these gloomy circumstances, it was no little comfort to find some immediate employment. If old business relations had given a right to friendship, yet my army contract business had separated me from my old acquaintances, and I had, literally, no one to whom I could turn. In this necessity, my friend Delaroche came to see me, and mentioned the transactions of the business of the "Numismatic Treasury," as a probable means of gaining my bread.

Of this, the next chapter will enlighten the reader.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE INVENTION OF N. COLLAS AND ITS APPLICATION—

The Company of the "Trésor de Numismatique et de Glyptique"—Its first success at Paris—Effort to extend it in England—Journey to London—Visit to the Cabinet of Medals, in the British Museum—Mr. E. Hawkins, the warden—Combination of his project for a numismatic history of Great Britain with my scheme—Attempted conclusion of an arrangement with the Trustees of the museum, in consequence of an understanding with the bookseller Tilt—His petition to the House of Commons, praying parliamentary aid in support of our project—The subject transferred to the Commons' Committee on the British Museum—Hearing of witnesses by the committee—Sir Francis Chantrey, the sculptor—Characteristic anecdotes of that artist—Unworthy opposition to my plan by the painter Brockedon, in combination with W. Wyon, the coin-engraver, and others, in favor of the mathematical instrument-maker, Bates—The committee arrive at no definite conclusion, and allow the examination of witnesses to drag on—Uninterrupted efforts on my part with the Trustees of the museum to gain my point—The nature of my propositions meets with a very satisfactory reception on their part, and they carry the cost of executing my plan into their budget—A deficit of 2,000,000 pounds sterling, in the general national Budget, compels the Royal High Chancellor to put his veto on this new appropriation.

A MECHANIC of great inventive talent, by name Nicholas Collas, of Paris, was ordered, just after the Revolution of 1830, by a copper-plate engraver, in Ghent, to make a machine, already known in England and America, for ruling or stippling straight or curved lines on steel and copper plates. This, together with a recollection of Collard's machine for stippling dial-plates, watch-cases, snuff-boxes, &c., called "tour à guillocher," a full drawing of which will be found in Bergeron's *Manuel des Tourneurs*, 1816, put it into his head to invent a process by which medals, bas-reliefs, intaglios, etc., might be engraved, for printing on steel or



copper. After five tedious months, Collas produced his first engraving in 1831. This product only proved the possibility of the project. The rest of the year and part of the next passed in studying to perfect the machine. At last, in autumn, 1832, he produced some copper-plate engravings, which amazed every one by their correctness and their almost palpable relief. It amazed Delaroche and myself. We had to touch the paper and look at the back of it to convince ourselves that it was not embossed. When the machine was perfected and its results evident, it struck Delaroche and myself that it might be used for artistic and scientific purposes, to give to the public some knowledge of certain private treasures, as cabinets of medals, which are usually hidden in colleges, and which might be thus cheaply exhibited to the world. At last, in connection with M. Lachevardière—a clever man of artistic spirit and knowledge, who had first made the French acquainted with the Penny Magazine by his *Magasin Pittoresque*—we organized a society of shareholders, to whom Mr. Collas not only sold his patents, but took the oversight and direction of the machines. A share of the *Magasin Pittoresque*, at first but 500 francs, rose the second year to 1500 francs. Our society was called “*Trésor de Numismatique et de Glyptique* ;” its capital, 50,000 francs, was divided into fifty shares, of 1000 each, whereof I took fifty, Delaroche, Lachevardière, and their friends, taking the rest. A year passed in copying the rarest medals, bas-reliefs, intaglios, etc. Toward the close of 1833 appeared some numbers of the publication, at the low price of 5 francs for five folio sheets, with texts from the most learned in France in numismatic and glyptic matters. The government was asked for support, and, on the report of a person named to investigate the matter, such support was promised. The Minister of the Interior subscribed for 100 copies. His Majesty, Louis Philippe, always a friend and patron of art ; the dukes of Orleans and Nemours ; all the princesses ; the Minister of Public Instruction ; the Chamber of Peers ; the Royal Cabinet of medals and antiques ; the Directors of the mint ; indeed, all who were known as patrons of art, not only in France but in Germany and Holland, were down upon the list of subscribers. In England

only was it received with indifference and but little known. The newness of the copper-plate had excited attention, but the actual service of the work seemed to the British Art-world only a proof of the progress of the graver. It is not to be gainsayed that, for correctness and cheapness, this work would have been of the greatest use, and would have been very popular too, if numismatic or glyptic studies were more common among the practical people of Great Britain. But only by the clear art-spirit of a capital like Paris, the home of intelligence and feeling for art, and by the artistic knowledge of Germany, her only central point and home of unity, could this invention take its proper rank among useful arts. Nothing would put back a discovery like the electric telegraph, which appeals to all ; but a true artist-spirit and appreciation of a discovery connected with art alone, exist only in France and Germany. I have seen the truth of this remark proved in later years ; but it now appeared to us that the lukewarmness of the British public toward our work, could only be attributed to the want of knowledge of its existence, and to the laziness of the French booksellers in London. I told Delaroche that an agent to bring it before the upper classes in England could not fail. Lord Francis Egerton, now Earl of Ellesmere, had seen the first number at Delaroche's, had been greatly struck with it, and had not only subscribed, but had promised it his patronage. This appeared to me to be an English port wherein our bark could find good anchorage, and our work be widely scattered through the country. I, therefore, determined, as my mite toward the undertaking, to go to England ; for, look where I would, I found nothing else that offered me the means of livelihood. I took a letter of introduction from Delaroche to Lord Egerton, and left Paris with twenty pounds in my pocket.

One of my first visits in London was to the coin and medal-cabinet of the British Museum, which contains some 90,000 specimens. Then I learned there was a perfect collection of all medals struck in honor of the men, or in illustration of the history, of the country, and that the dies were broken. The idea struck me to get up a medallion history of England, and to make use of the 3000 specimens in the museum therefor. The proper person

to be addressed was Mr. Edward Hawkins, overseer of the Cabinet of Medals, a man whose reputation for uprightness was no less than for talent and learning, in which he took first rank, and who for many years had been engaged upon a work of this kind. I was introduced to him, and was lucky enough to gain his good will. He had examined with visible pleasure the proofs of our machine, and now hoped for the first time that his work might be finished, so long delayed by the enormous cost of engraving the medals upon copper or steel.

After the groundwork of the work was settled upon, the next thing needed was a publisher. But the London booksellers whom I knew—Murray, Byron's publisher: Longman, Rees, Brown & Co.; Pickering and others, would not listen to me. The difficulty of the project was the first objection; the indifference of the British public to works of this nature, the second. I now presented my letter of introduction to Lord Egerton; he took it and promised his help to my undertaking, towards which he gave me a particular letter of recommendation to his friend, the Earl of Aberdeen, an important member of British Museum Committee on Antiques. The cabinet of medals was in this department.

I had heard much of Lord Aberdeen. One of my friends who had often met him, described him as the haughtiest and most reserved of all Tories, from whom I might scarcely expect a polite word. I determined to send my letter to his residence, Argyle House, with a request that he would name a day and hour to receive me. A polite note gave the information, and I called upon him. I found a cold, serious, but yet gentle man, who gave me a chair in a very courtly way, and inquired in what he could serve me. I stated my project as briskly and clearly as possible, the only way with the practical business-like Englishman, and found it received even with a sort of warmth. He promised a couple of letters to other members of the Museum Committee, and said that he would give me all possible aid. When I received these letters, I found a couple of lines from Lord Aberdeen, very pressing lines, to Lord Ashburton, who was an important member of the Committee. On the visit which I paid to this old friend and patron, I did not send up my name, but told the servant to



announce a gentleman who brought a letter of introduction from Lord Aberdeen. At my entrance he was doubly astonished, first to see me, and then to learn my business, so widely different from that in which we had been engaged together. He heard the story of my last five years, and promised to do what he could for my project when it should come before the committee. Once assured of the help of the Museum Committee, it became an easier matter to find a publisher for a Medal History of England. I found Charles Tilt already well known for the beauty of his art publications. The plan was laid before the Trustees, who through pure ignorance of what it all meant, laid it for the time aside. Fortunately for me, there was a daily committee of the House of Commons busied with an examination into the affairs of the Museum, and when the Trustees' decision was made known, it was hinted to me that I would do far better with the Parliamentary Committee. This could only be done by petition to the House, and Mr. Tilt willingly sent in such petition, craving an examination into the whole thing. As luck would have it, I had many acquaintances among the members, and I spared no trouble in seeking them out, and trying to interest them in my scheme. At last my desires were fulfilled, but a new difficulty arose. Many of the members of the Committee held that they had no right to do anything with the petition. Even Mr. Hawkins thought it probable that they would not touch it. But several of them interested themselves for me; as B. Hawes, W. B. Baring (now Lord Ashburton) Thomas Thorneley, and Lord Stanley, now Earl of Derby, to whom I was presented by my friend Adam Hodgson of Liverpool, who had married one of his cousins. I labored with these gentlemen, until we obtained a resolution to examine this new method of engraving. Mr. Hawkins could scarcely believe his eyes when he received a request to present himself before the committee on June 14, 1836. Sir Francis Chantrey, to whom Lord Egerton had introduced me, came also and warmly promoted my cause.

It is well known, that since the Greeks and Romans, none have reached such excellence in portrait sculpture, busts, as Chantrey, and, since his death, no one has taken his place. He knew his

countrymen well, and that in painting and sculpture they particularly encouraged the portrait. " 'T is the most money-making part of my business," he said to me once, as I wondered that the sculptor of the Children in Litchfield Cathedral, could stick to bust-making, which required no inspiration. He said he could not live by his chisel without it. He was a farmer's son, and had studied painting in his youth, but with no great success. At a family feast, where his mother wished to regale her guests with a pasty, he conceived the idea of moulding a hen in dough, and putting it on the top of the pasty. This hen was his golden egg-laying goose, for it commenced that fortune which grew before his death to £15,000 per annum. The fowl was so exquisitely natural, that the fame of it spread far and wide, and Chantrey, after several other attempts, recognized his proper vocation to be that of a sculptor, and went to London. Here he earned a poor livelihood by portrait painting, and at last saved enough to procure a little sculptor's studio. He then went to the celebrated Horne Tooke, who had broken a stout lance with Junius, and had been prosecuted by Pitt as a demagogue and public disturber, and obtained from him several sittings. When the bust was finished, Chantrey had not money enough to cast it in plaster; but he got it at last, and took the bust to the sculptor Nollekens, at time at the head of the art world in London. He was too late, however, for the exhibition. Though a man of cool phlegmatic temperament, Chantrey was "cruelly disappointed." "Let us see what you have here," said Nollekens, and Chantrey uncovered the bust. At the first glance, Nollekens started with amazement. "What!" he cried, "is that your first work?" Scarcely had Chantrey said yes, when he added, "Well, it is too perfect to be kept from the public," and though the exhibition was full, Nollekens took back one of his own works, and placed the ticket upon Tooke's bust and the best in the exhibition. The consequences were unexampled, but well merited. I have seen it fifty times, and always with fresh pleasure; for it bore the unmistakable stamp of Truth, and to all who had seen Tooke or not, it appeared like a living being, who would answer if addressed. Before the forty days of exhibition were over, Chantrey told me he had received orders

for £5,000 worth of busts. His reputation and his fortune were made. The plaster gallery of his busts, in his own studio, can not be looked upon without astonishment. The life-likeness which was the great merit of Tooke's bust, is found in all, and all exhibit the character as well as the physical appearance of the originals. Chantrey surpassed the great Sir Joshua, as well as Lawrence, and all other English portrait takers, in presenting the exact likeness of the sitter, and his peculiar method of modelling a head was the best proof of his cleverness as artist. He did not keep his sitter in one position; but after a short study of his head, features, and manner, he allowed him to move about and converse naturally. One day in his gallery of busts, he asked me if I would like to see his two finest heads, and to my affirmative reply, he said, "Here they are!" pointing to George IV., and the Marquis of Westminster. "I have bothered myself but little," he said, "about Gall and Spurzheim, although there is much truth in their observations. In these two heads the organ of pride is the same, and cannot fail to be recognized." Another day I asked him whether his long practice had not shown him that the eyes of very reflective people were deeply sunk, while those of persons whose thoughts were more open and public, were prominent. I gave this as the result of my own observation, without any reference to the fact that his own eyes were deep sunk. "Will my decision," said he, "confirm your own observation?" "No," I said, "but the resemblance of our views would please me, who have seen and looked sharply at so many clever great men." "Well," he said, "there is much truth in your observation; but, as a rule, it is full of exceptions: for instance, look at me. What do I look like? Why, like an honest, dull-headed, perhaps stupid, Englishman, but I am not a fool for all that." This way of speaking, gave his conversation much liveliness, and I was very fond of his society. The son of a small farmer, his education had not been remarkable. Now, however, his rapid rise had made necessary correspondence with great and highly educated men, as well as official communications to the government. To avoid error, he had taken the well-instructed Scottish poet Allan Cunningham for secretary, and, at a good salary, committed to him his correspond-



ence and his books. I was induced to believe that Chantrey had not only learned good grammar from his amanuensis, but also a better hand-writing, for I possess the hand-writing of both, and the resemblance between them is striking.

Chantrey was supreme authority in all governmental sculpture. Nothing could be done without him. As the bronze equestrian statue of Charles II. had been observed to shake, on stormy days, upon its pedestal, Sir Francis was requested to examine it, and report. The English are as fond of reports as the Austrians. The statue had been fastened with iron nails, which the rust had turned to dust, so that its weight alone kept it steady. "Any blockhead might have told them," said Chantrey, "that brass fastenings were the only things that would do for the future—there was no need to bother me about the matter." In his verbal reports, however, some of which I heard, to government committees, Sir Francis never failed to make the best of the matter; dwelling with great gravity on the points in which he had moved. He liked his authority as Sir Oracle, and when I would laugh, he would look grave until the committee had gone, and then say, with a smile, "It will not do to trifle with these gentlemen."

I saw his influence, and wanted his testimony before a committee of the House. He did not at first seem very willing, but I pressed the matter, speaking of the pleasure it would give Lord Francis Egerton, to see his taste for foreign art aided, and at last got from him his promise to come and testify.

When he came into the room, every one rose respectfully, and shook hands with him. All over London, particularly in the world of art, much had been said about the copper-plates of our *Tresor de Numismatique et de Glyptique*, particularly the word "distortion" had been freely used, and that the figures were untrue. The director of the Cabinet of Medals, Mr. Hawkins, was examined after Sir Francis. To the question, whether these engravings by the machine of M. Collas were wanting in correctness, and whether the eye of an artist could perceive the distortion, even if invisible to ordinary eyes, Sir Francis answered as follows:—

No. 5653.—Q. "You believe that this lack of correctness does not injure this as a work of art?" A. "I never noticed this slight

incorrectness until it was pointed out to me, and then it seemed of very little importance." (Remember that the first sculptor in England is speaking.) "And these representations of medals are the best I have hitherto seen; better than the ordinary copper-plates after drawings."

No. 5658.—*Q.* "Do these plates please you as works of art?"  
*A.* "Perfectly. They answer every purpose of art."

No. 5660.—*Q.* "This incorrectness, then, is not so great as to amount to distortion or any other visible defect?" *A.* "It produced no unpleasant effect upon me; nor did I remark it until it was pointed out to me."

No. 5799.—*Q.* "Would you, being in possession of one of these representations, consider yourself in possession of a copy, or its equivalent, of the medal?" *A.* "That would be my feeling, as artist."

Nos. 5801, 5802.—"Here," said Sir Francis, "the word distortion is improper. Distortion is too strong and signifies a great want of truthfulness, not the case with these plates."

Mr. Hawkins spoke in the same way; and the testimony of these two gentlemen had so much influence with the committee, that they promised me to speak well of the undertaking, and even more. But this hope vanished all too soon. Two days after the examination, I heard that Wm. Wyon, seal and die maker to the royal mint, and Wm. Brockeden, an unfortunate historical painter, had determined to inquire into the matter closely; because they desired to give all their influence to a Mr. John Bates, a machinist, in London, who four years ago had obtained patents for various improvements in line engraving, but whose indolence had kept him slumbering all this time. I had heard little of him before, except from everybody, even Mr. Wyon himself, that his laziness would prevent his ever completing his invention. At last the committee determined to hear Messrs. Wyon and Brockeden, on the 24th of June, when they appeared, with Mr. John Henning, sen., an old Scottish sculptor, and Mr. Doubleday, a voluntary aid in the British Museum. The tendency of this examination was evident—the failure of the project for which I had so striven, the object of this unworthy combination, at the head of which was

Mr. Brockeden, an old and interested intriguer. I have already said that Brockeden commenced in the world of art as historical painter. At his first exhibition he was greeted with universal reprobation, from which he never recovered, because criticism could not correct nor lessen his self-conceit. His want of success induced him to make and describe an Alpine journey, and in union with Finden, Heath, and others, to publish the Keepsake, which had so long and indescribable success. It was the golden age of mediocre productions, and Brockeden gained abundantly thereby. As compensation for his failure as historical painter, he had found a place as Mecænas of art and patron of invention. His universal genius was equally at home in the perfection of lithography, and in the invention of India-rubber corks; and he undertook everything that seemed likely to pay—which, indeed, was the cause of his interference now. For the reader will understand that neither Brockeden nor Wyon had been invited by the committee, but that they had insisted on being heard. The whole cause of the opposition was Brockeden's private interest; he having listened to a conversation between Mr. Wyon and myself, on occasion of a visit paid by me to the mint. Without having any previous acquaintance with me, he broke into the conversation, by asking, "What will your copper-plates cost?" Mr. Wyon saw the impoliteness, and after he had introduced his friend, I observed to the latter, that he had nothing to do with our conversation. This interview had no positive evident result. Mr. Wyon asked time for reflection; said that he would in no wise oppose me, but that, perhaps, I had better not call on him to testify about the lack of correctness in the drawings. I then said, that I preferred to have his name. He replied, that he would advise with only one person in the matter, namely, Mr. Hawkins, who was daily expected from Paris; and that he would determine so soon as he had spoken to that gentleman. Soon after, Mr. Hawkins told me that the interview had taken place, but without result, as neither could convert the other to his views. Then I determined to leave Mr. Wyon in peace. He had voluntarily promised not to oppose me; but at his first examination, I saw the worthlessness of his promise. On the second day after, I heard that Wyon and



Brockeden had obtained great interest, for the destruction of my project, and were likely to reap where I had sowed. The ground of the opposition was the imperfectness of our machine; and although these gentlemen had never seen one, they still held themselves clever enough to decide, that the productions of such a thing must be distorted. Here was the great difficulty in my way, and in the way of Collas's machine. For if the committee were convinced that it could not produce correct engravings, the scheme was ruined. I begged permission to produce other witnesses; which was at once granted, with a kindness not to be forgotten by a stranger, whose plans were thus about to be destroyed. On the 12th of July appeared before the committee the eminent medalist of the Royal Mint, M. Benedetto Pistrucci, and the great cameo cutter, Wilson. The former said, that so far from distorting, the machine would give a better idea than even a medal or cameo; as it would furnish, not a vertical but an oblique view, rendering the light clearer and the shadow deeper. The mathematical correctness given by the vertical view of a medal, proves by the measure, from the centre to the rim, that the effect is given by the engraving as perfectly as by the medal itself. "The engravings," he said, "were of no value to the medalist. He wanted nothing but correctness of contour; but for the public, for all others, these were far more useful and valuable."

Under these circumstances, the committee could come to no resolution. They called no more testimony, and allowed their report to remain unreported. My opponents had not won, but they kept me out of the reward of my services. Fate had dealt hardly with me, but yet kept a crueller trick in store. I had now to reflect on the end of my mercantile career in the United States, in 1826; on the end of my contractorship in 1834; and now, on the destruction of a reasonable hope, and an almost executed plan. The motto of my book was always present to me—

" There are wanderers o'er eternity,  
Whose bark floats on, and anchored  
Never shall be."

yet I did not let my courage fail. The German proverb says,

"Will is power." Napoleon says, "The word impossible is not in my dictionary." This, thank God, has always upheld me. This time a lucky accident helped me.

Mr. Brockeden had, in his determination to ruin me, and advance the cause of Mr. Bates, written an article in the Literary Gazette. Fancying himself a linguist, and wishing to speak of the "*procédé de Collas*" (Collas's process), he always wrote "*proces de Collas*, (Collas's lawsuit.) He knew me to be an American citizen, as I had been for thirty years, and his wit described me as the American owner of a French invention; while he considered me as very wicked, in desiring to rob a celebrated English engineer of his invention. This article fell into the hands of a native American, resident in London, and awakened his patriotism in my behalf. It was then well-known, and since renowned civil engineer, James Bogardus, of New York. Inventor of the gas-metre, he had employed another American to come to England, and sell the patent. This unworthy villain sold everything to a speculator, for £1000, who sold it to all the gas companies for £10,000, and when Bogardus came on, he gained £800 only. Bogardus, who had made ruling machines for the great paper manufacturers in New York, and knew of the medal machine, knew also the power of Bates' machine. Saxton, the bank-note engraver, in Philadelphia, and others, had already found out Bates' machine, although they could not prevent his getting a patent. Mr. Saxton, in a letter of May 6, 1836, gave me all the particulars of this. Bogardus offered his help to make me a perfect machine in a few weeks. He did so, and our work was so perfect, in effect of light and shade, as to give all that was wanting to the production of Collas's invention.

As my readers cannot be interested in this systematic and methodic persecution of my opponents, I will content myself with setting down one anecdote.

Mr. Bates sent copperplates to all the officers of the Museum, with circulars, stating that these had no distortions like the French machine. In every window you saw the head of the Ariadne from the cameo, labelled, "By Mr. Bates' Machine;" and an abominable distortion, labelled, "By the French Machine."

Finally, Mr. Bates introduced the engraver, Freebairn, to the bookseller, Herring, four years after his machine had ceased to be known by anybody. I had the *Canterbury Pilgrimage*, by Herring, engraved by our machine in Paris, for Herring, and fifteen hundred copies were sold in one week. I was still in treaty with Mr. Herring, when Mr. Freebairn was endeavoring to convince him that all the productions of the French machine were distortions.

All was ready to go on with our arrangement, and to make the productions of the Collas machine as popular as possible. The *London Literary Gazette*, which had thoroughly taken sides with Mr. Bates, published Feb. 11, 1847, an article by Mr. Brockeden, containing a letter from Mr. Bates, in which he excuses himself for mingling in my plans. "For more than four years," said he, "at the time that I discovered the correct machine, I had the Museum medals in view. I had made my application to the Trustees, but they paid no attention to it. I was perhaps too modest, and did not possess the advantage of being a foreigner." Every one knew that nothing more would have been heard of Bates, had Brockeden not discovered that his machine might be made valuable. This interference with me was perfectly voluntary; Mr. Wyon's opposition was a breach of promise, and the means adopted were unworthy of honorable men. I was fortunate enough, with the approbation of the first men and friends of art in England, to expose these unworthy intrigues, in my "*Memorial of Facts connected with the History of Medallie Engraving, and the process of A. Collas*," in Charles Tilt's superb work, "*The Authors of England*." The present possessor of the magnificent seat "Deepdene," Henry Hope, Esq., whose collection of jewels in the London Crystal Palace excited so much attention, and who is the son of the late H. T. Hope, named in the second chapter, after reading this memorial, wrote to me as follows:—"I never until now studied the details of your struggle; but, after a careful analysis of your exposition, I must say that you excel, not only by the favorable artistic testimony, and the clear logic of your argumentation, but by the rare beauty of your copper-plates."



Before I returned to Paris, I sent a small collection of engravings, by Bogardus's machine, to the Earl of Aberdeen, who had so helped me in my project. The answer of this gentleman—never properly estimated during his long life—ought not to be uninteresting to the reader, now that he has probably succeeded in closing forever the Temple of Janus, between the warring Whigs and Tories, and perfected the union of the parties. It is as follows :

“ ARGYLE HOUSE, Aug. 2, 1833.

SIR—I beg to express my acknowledgments for the very beautiful specimens of engraving, by your machine, which you have had the goodness to send me. It would appear that the art had now arrived at a degree of perfection which is not likely to be surpassed.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your very ob't. humble servant,

ABERDEEN.

MR. V. NOLTE.

I inclose the order for the House of Lords.”

I must confess my vanity, and frankly declare that my reception by this high Tory is one of the most pleasing recollections of my life. What I had to say to him about the Museum business was soon over ; but when I took my hat to go, he begged me to remain, and answer a few other questions, about matters generally in France. This was particularly the case when I returned from Paris in 1837.

The whole course of the Brockeden clique had made a bad impression upon all right-minded Englishmen, especially of the higher classes. Honorable feeling induced them to examine my project, and after conviction of its usefulness, to support it ; yet there still existed a fear of showing to the masses a support for a foreign combination, which they might be refusing to their own equally deserving countrymen. Even if cheapness, rapidity, and the excellence of the engraving could be shown to be on our side, yet the success of the strangers would be placed in its worst possible light by the other party. This feeling existed also among

the trustees of the Museum, and it was essential to show to the public, that the debate was not between native and foreigner, but about the relative merits of the two machines. To bring this about, I placed before the trustees, through the medium of Mr. Hawkins, some twelve or eighteen engravings, from the most difficult medals, proper for the illustration of the medallie history written by Mr. H.; and they were shown by him to be the cheapest, best, and most rapidly produced possible illustrations for his work. The trustees were pleased, and, to my no small joy, recommended a grant from the treasury of £8000, towards the furtherance of the plan arranged by Mr. Tilt and myself. This was to be laid before the treasurer by Mr. Spring Rice, now Lord Monteagle. The customary budget of the trustees had for many years never surpassed £20,000; this year it rose to £28,000, and the warmest recommendations of me, by the trustees, accompanied it to the treasury. The then secretary of the treasury was Mr. Francis Thornhill Baring, eldest son of Sir Thomas Baring, Bart., who had been first lord of the admiralty, under Lord John Russell's administration, and who succeeded to his father's title. It was one of the Barings whom I did not personally know; but his brother Thomas, now as then one of the heads of the London firm, had given me a letter to him. On my second visit, he said that the recommendation of the trustees would cause him to lay the matter before the Chancellor, with whom the final power of decision rested. "Here," he said, taking a bundle of papers, "here is my report, and here are the recommendations of the trustees. Now all is ready for the decision: what that will be I cannot guess; it depends upon the money to spare."

These last were not hopeful words, and a couple of weeks later the State Budget showed a deficit of £2,000,000. I saw that the matter was settled. No treasurer could consent to increase that deficit by a grant of £8,000 even though that were only to be paid in the course of four years.

Mr. Rice informed the trustees that many other things were pressing upon the treasury of far more importance than a "Medallie History of England" could possibly be. All was over. I bowed before the bitter fate that, after two and a half years' labor, thus again overwhelmed me.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### QUEEN VICTORIA—THE QUEEN'S BENCH-PRISON—THE QUEEN'S CORONATION.

Plan to strike off a portrait-medal of the queen—Sir John Conroy, grand equerry of the Duchess of Kent—His resignation—The Baroness Lehzen, lady-secretary to the queen, who procures admission for myself and the sculptor Weeks to Her Majesty's presence—The result of this audience—My arrest and confinement in the Queen's Bench-prison, in consequence of legal proceedings on the part of the litigious and runaway Duke Charles of Brunswick—My liberation, after  $3\frac{1}{2}$  months' imprisonment—Unexpected arrival of my wife—The queen's Coronation-day—The simultaneous ascent of seven air-balloons from Hyde Park—Return of my wife to Paris—My determination to revisit the United States—Announcement of the second trip of the steamship Great Western across the Atlantic Ocean—Old Admiral Coffin, whom I meet at Leamington, tries to dissuade me from availing myself of this opportunity to sail for New York, and to prove the insecurity of ocean steam-navigation, upon nautical grounds—Still, I sail by the steamer—Arrival at New York, after an uncommonly stormy passage of eighteen days.

I HAD occupied myself about a medallion-portrait of Victoria, before her coming to the throne. Mr. Henry Weeks, a very worthy young artist, pupil and right-hand man of Sir Francis Chantrey, and who for a couple of years had made most of the busts and statues which passed for Chantrey's, wanted to make a bust of her future majesty, an honor which I resolved to procure for him. As he had also determined to make her medallion-likeness for me, I determined to address Sir John Conroy, Master of Horse and Gentleman of Honor to the Duchess of Kent, with whom he had great influence. Lord Francis Egerton, with his usual kindness, gave me a note of introduction. Sir John received me politely, but with a reserve that showed how important a member of the household he esteemed himself, and assured me



graciously that he would represent my desires to her Highness, and, if possible, obtain her consent that her daughter should sit to Weeks for a bust. He soon informed me that the princess was ready, and that Mr. Weeks would be received upon a certain day. He obtained one sitting; but then King William became seriously ill, and the surgeons pronounced his case dangerous. Further sittings were postponed. I bewailed this to Sir John, observing that, once upon the throne, the princess would perhaps be unable to give any more sittings. He promised to speak to the duchess, and in a few days wrote to me as follows:—

KENSINGTON PALACE, June 17, 1837.

Sir John Conroy has been commanded by Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Kent, that, although the Princess Victoria cannot now sit to Mr. Weeks, he may be assured of future sittings from Her Royal Highness.

King William IV. died on June 20, 1837, and the Princess Victoria mounted the throne. Not long after the Royal Gazette contained the news that Sir John Conroy no longer occupied the post of Master of Horse to the Duchess, nor any other post at Court. All London was amazed. Sir John had been a great favorite with the Duke of Kent, and with his widow, the Duchess. His daughter, who was born about the same time with the queen, received the name of Victoria, and the two girls had not only grown up together, but were intimate friends. The cause of this sudden separation and of Sir John's fall remained unknown. From what I had seen of Sir John's manner, I judged that Victoria had, perhaps, had too much of his authority, as princess, and had now determined to get rid of him, and not to allow him any longer to remain in her mother's household. It is well known that the young queen took no trouble to hide her impatience of control, as, on the retirement of the Melbourne ministry, when she determined to keep all the court ladies in their places, among others, the Duchess of Sutherland. This was an innovation that Lord Melbourne's successor, Sir Robert Peel, could not allow; but the queen was firm, until Lord Melbourne, the British states-

man best instructed in constitutional forms and uses, undertook to ameliorate matters, and, if possible, to bring her royal majesty to reason. It only gave another proof that the rulers of this world are not always *compos mentis*.

I went to Sir Henry Wheatley, the new private secretary, and showing him Sir John Conroy's last letter, asked his advice. He spoke of the Baroness Lehzen as the most proper person to procure a continuation of the sittings. I went to Windsor, where the baroness was with the queen, was announced, politely received, and obtained a promise that all should go well. The next week a day was appointed for Mr. Weeks to renew his labors. Weeks told me that when he began, the queen observed that most portrait painters drew her with her mouth open, which was not very becoming, and would he be so good as to shut it a little. Her majesty possesses what is called a "rabbit's mouth;" that is, the two front teeth project over the under lip. The queen was as positive in her wishes as a large mouthed French lady, who once sate to Jarvis, and puzzled him by requesting him "to put a little mouse in her face."

She gave him three sittings, and this bust, the first of the Queen, was a real masterpiece, and obtained a great deal of attention at the Exposition of 1838. I had suggested to Weeks to fasten up the great quantity of back hair which the Queen wore on the back of her head, and to replace the comb by a small crown. The suggestion was successful, and pleased everybody, particularly her Majesty, when she first saw the bust. The medallion portrait was also successful, and the plate taken from it by Bogardus' "self-acting tracer," was the finest specimen of art that had yet appeared. Neither Collas' machine, nor the stiffly moving one of Bates, had the soft well formed lines of Bogardus' invention which imitated the best productions of Raphael Morghen.

The Baroness Lehzen had procured permission for me to present some twenty copies of this to her Majesty, and Weeks and my self were requested to come to Buckingham Palace. On former visits to Windsor, I had become acquainted with Mr. Fozard, the Queen's riding-master. We spoke once of the Queen's person, and I asked if she were pretty as commonly reported. "Oh!"

he said, "she is most beautiful—you never saw the like." On my arrival at Windsor, I was sent into a room, where the baroness soon came in her riding-dress, with the skirt thrown over her arm. "Ah!" she said, "you are there. I will tell her Majesty. You will not have to wait long." She had just returned from accompanying the Queen in a ride. In a little while I heard a rustle, and said to myself, "In a moment, the Majesty of England will stand before thine eyes." The door opened, and a young lady, with a couple of heavy locks fallen about her face, entered hastily, followed by the baroness and two ladies of honor. Yet it was not a hasty step, but rather a waddle, like that—I say it with reverence—of a duck. At the first glance, the uplifted dress permitted me to remark that her instep was not like that of the Venus de Medicis, but on the contrary, that her Majesty was flat-footed. The Queen went directly to the bust which was placed on rather too lofty a pedestal, and repeated two or three times, "It is very fine." Then she came to me, who had opened a handsome portfolio, containing the engravings. She was astonished at the relief; lifted one of them and turned it to see if it were not embossed. I had prepared answers to expected questions on the nature of the machine, but in a moment, she gave me one nod, and Weeks another, and with one more glance at her bust, waddled away, followed by a lady of honor. The other lady, Lady Caroline Cavendish and the Baroness remained, and were far more curious than her Majesty, and asked me a great many questions. Then the Baroness inquired if it were my intention to get the portraits of other European sovereigns. I answered yes; and mentioned the King of the Belgians as the next, because I knew that he was her friend and patron, and had procured her her post near the Queen.

As I came back from the Castle, I saw Mr. Fozard before me. "Well, sir," said he, "how did you find her Majesty?" "Why, Mr. Fozard," I said, "I am far from being surprised at her beauty. She has enough of it for a queen, but she is not a handsome woman." "For God's sake, don't say so," he said, "hereabouts we don't hear many remarks of that sort. Her Majesty is certainly beautiful, very beautiful, and she rides well, extremely



well. I have been her teacher, and when she is going to take exercise on horseback, it is me who enjoys the honor of placing her royal boot—; here he clapped his hand to his mouth—her royal person, I was going to say—upon the saddle, and of putting her royal foot into the stirrup.”

I then bid farewell to Mr. Fozard, the riding-master, and returned with my friend Weeks to London.

In the Court News appeared a short notice of the honor her majesty had done me; and I saw no result, save a good one, from it all. Nevertheless, two days afterwards I was arrested in my house, in Edgeware Road, at the suit of Duke Charles of Brunswick. I had taken a contract from his companion, Baron Andlau, for sabretaches, sword and bayonet sheaths, and knapsacks; for which the Duke had paid 50,000 francs on account, and had promised to pay all within two months. This contract was not fulfilled, and the belligerent duke instantly commenced a suit, without a word of advice to me. The question was, simply, whether I was bound by the whole contract before the duke had fulfilled his part; but he was fond of lawsuits, as his numerous cases in England proved. I had hitherto lived unsued, and this one only served to complete my distress. So soon as Baron Andlau heard of this suit, he brought me 8000 francs, out of 10,000 which had not been paid in the above-named sum of 50,000, and said that the agent in the transaction would be accountable for the other 2000. The baron had served the duke as long as the unworthy nature of the latter would permit, but there were other grounds for their separation, which took place soon after. He now brought me back the money, for fear of certain possible expositions, which would have lost him the duke's confidence. The case was decided against me, and I was condemned to pay back the whole sum, without regard to the fact that I had expended 30,000 francs in the contract. There should have been an appeal, but my clerk, whom I left in Paris, on my journey to Rome, seeing how difficulties were thronging about me, lost his head, and did nothing, except sell all the sheaths and knapsacks that had been bought for about half their cost. I was utterly helpless on my return from Rome, and was nearly penniless when I went to

England. Of course I could do nothing without money. The duke had sworn in London to my indebtedness, and that sufficed to put me in prison. He knew my circumstances perfectly well; and although assured that my imprisonment would not procure restitution of his advances, yet his evil nature forbade him to be kind to any one whom he had in his power. I learned, too, that he was angry because the queen had received me, while he was forbidden the court forever. I could have gotten bail, but was unable to pay a lawyer, and so I determined to bear my fate as it came. I had two reasons for this. First, that the House of Commons was then occupied with the question of imprisonment for debt, and everybody was waiting for the result of their deliberations; and second, that my honest friend Emanuel Bernoulli, then resident in London, was in hopes of arranging matters with the duke's solicitor. My old friend Siegmund Rücker discovered my whereabouts by accident. He came to see me, and promised to get me the "liberties," namely, four square miles about the prison of "Queen's Bench," by going bail for me. But week after week passed, without my hearing further from him. I supposed him to be ill, but afterwards learned that he had followed the advice of a mutual acquaintance, to have nothing to do with a matter which must cost him trouble, and might cost money. I was again the plaything of a ruthless fate, and only got out of one scrape that I might fall into another. I heard no more of friend Rücker, and remained a member of the large and varied society of the Queen's Bench; among which I found one old acquaintance, an Englishman, named Swaine, with whom I had become acquainted thirty years before in New York; whom I had frequently seen during my visits to London, and whom, from his neatness of dress, I had supposed to be wealthy, although a hard drinker.

There ought to be interest enough among my readers to accept here a description of the Queen's Bench prison, of which I was an inmate for three months and a half. After passing through three well-watched gates, you enter a large oblong court, girt by a wall 50 or 55 feet high. To the right, in a corner, is a well-built three-story house, which is let at a high rent to noble prisoners. One

gentleman had inhabited one story for fourteen years ; another, the great William Cobbett's son, had been eight years in the prison. From the left corner to the outer wall of the place stretched a double row of houses, the furthest of which could be hired, furnished, by such as were able to pay ; the others were for those who lived on the allowance of their creditors. At the end of these houses is a small covered market, where one can buy at eight o'clock, A. M., fresh fish, flesh, vegetables, eggs, butter, etc. You either buy for yourself or trust servants, who are not always very conscientious. From the market you take your purchases to one of the cookshops in the neighborhood, and get it prepared for your table. You get your breakfast from female attendants, who are here in plenty, and who are the wives of poor debtors. The large oblong place between the furthest row of houses and the wall is a ball-ground and promenade, where, when the weather permits, you can breathe the air, and, if you choose, imagine yourself at liberty. The space between the other row and the wall is much narrower. As soon as the doors are opened in the morning, it pours a torrent of outsiders, shopkeepers, visitors, newsmen, etc. To an Englishman, the newspaper is the first necessity ; the breakfast comes afterwards ; with poor prisoners as long after as possible. "Time is money," is not true in prison ; there time is a burden, which grows day by day heavier, and must yet be borne with patience. A postman helps you to communicate with your friends, and a circulating library within the prison-bounds furnishes you with intellectual pastime.

The society of the Queen's Bench is an epitome of the world. Here is the indebted peer, the ruined speculator, the unfortunate merchant, the impoverished artisan, the rich and poor burgess and noble together. There is an especial abundance of those who have spent all upon horses, or women, or cards. I had several pointed out to me, but shunned a nearer acquaintance. My cicerone was a reverend vicar, singularly unlike the Vicar of Wakefield, who had preferred the race-course to the parsonage, and had expended at Newmarket what should have paid the butcher and baker. This man lived in the same house with me, and had scraped acquaintance on the door-step ; and I allowed him to visit



me because his good-humored, child-like narratives amused me. He knew every face in the prison, and had something to tell about each, to which I listened; for, I confess it, if I love anything, it is a little bit of scandal.

The slow progress of the bill for the modification of imprisonment made me very impatient. My old friend, Thomas Thorneley, of Liverpool, member of Parliament for Wolverhampton, was good enough to give me a hope that the debates would soon terminate; but three and a half months' loneliness, with no comfort but this hope, had destroyed my patience. Now approached the coronation of a queen, adored since childhood, and the only monarch in Europe who could follow the standard of Freedom hand in hand with the happy people. I was much occupied with the thought of the crowds of strangers now pouring into London. I desired freedom, if only for the day; not for love of festivity, but to share with a full heart in the jubilant feeling of the people. One day, the upper gaoler told me I was free. Bernouilli had come to an understanding with the duke's solicitor. I left the place at 1 P. M., called a hack, and drove home to Edgeware Road. Then I went to Bernouilli, to inquire by what means he had procured my liberation. He had agreed that I should pay the whole sum with interest, at so much a year, beginning from July 1, 1844. It might well be doubted whether I would reach the 66th year of my life to pay; but I did, and eleven years later, at the age of seventy, I began to prepare my "System of Assurance and Bottomry," which employed me during two years and a half. Now in freedom, I could remark the masses of people, from every land, now streaming through the streets of London. I abstain here from describing the various groups that thronged the streets and squares, particularly Leicester Square and the neighborhood of Haymarket Theatre, because I have already done much the same thing, with reference to the great exhibition some years before. But the effect of such crowds upon a just released prisoner was extraordinary.

A day or two afterwards there was a knock at my door; it opened, and I saw my wife. For this pleasure I had to thank my old, unchanging friend, Jacques de Berckholtz, who had long lived

in Paris, and now gave the lie to Rousseau's assertion, that Paris is "*la ville ou l'amitié ne résiste ni à l'adversité ni à l'absence.*" A little group of friends had determined to come to London for the coronation, and my wife had taken this opportunity. She thus was enabled to bring me consolation, and to see a rare festival. She loved sight-seeing; and, indeed, what woman does not, if it be not too costly!

Early on the morning of her arrival she went to the Queen's Bench, and there learned my release, and came to Edgeware Road.

The coronation took place the next day, and our friends had accepted the offer of a window in St. James-street. The procession was to pass through St. James-street, Pall Mall, Charing Cross, and Westminster, to the Cathedral. I saw the procession from a window in Charing Cross, with Weeks, the sculptor, and his amiable wife. A hearty cheer greeted the French Ambassador, Marshal Soult, as he sat in his own Parisian, and unusually elegant carriage. Sir Robert Peel led the cheer from a window of the Carlton Club, swinging his hat and commencing a hurrah, that was echoed down the line to the very Cathedral. He himself was not in the church, but remained in the club.

One of the finest sights of the day was the ascension of the great Nassau Balloon surrounded by seven others, from St. James's Park at the close of the coronation. The day was unusually fine, and the sky quite cloudless. If the crowds of people were unable all to see their young queen, at least they saw the full glory of the sun, a very rare occurrence in London, "where," say the Neapolitans, "he is not worth the moon in Naples."

After showing my wife whatever was remarkable in London, which she found not so amusing as the Boulevards, I accompanied her to Southampton, whence she set out with her friends for Paris. She quit with but little regret the ancient mass of stone, Westminster Abbey, and the rusty relics in the Tower, without any wish to see them again. Her strongest desires were to get back to her daughter, and to breathe again the air of Paris. I had as yet no clear views for future employment; but my habit of considering the United States the land of hope, and a great desire to

revisit it, reigned within me. I had lived and labored there so long, had made so many acquaintances, had so advanced its commerce, especially in cotton, that it appeared impossible that I should be forgotten there, or that I would not be able here and there to find some traces of former trust and good will. To get such thoughts out of my head, as soon as the packet in which my wife had sailed came back, I went down to Bristol to take a look at the marine wonder, the Great Western, just returned from her first voyage to New York. I also remembered an old London acquaintance, now in the firm of Guppy. On my return through Cheltenham, which I had not seen for twenty-nine years, I visited Leamington, where I found an old acquaintance whom I had supposed to be dead. This was Admiral Coffin, with whom I had become acquainted thirty-three years before in his birthplace, Boston, and who was now watching for his last hour in peace, convinced that he had done his duty both as man and mariner. He, like the old book-keeper at Leghorn, knew me by my voice. I told him of my idea of making a voyage to America in the Great Western. "Ah!" said he, taking my hand kindly, "if you esteem your life, give up that thought. The Great Western has had the good fortune to make one summer transatlantic voyage, but in autumn and early winter it is a risk of human life to sail in her. She may succeed once or twice, but that is all. In the heavy winter storms no steamer can scud; be sure of that." Somewhat shaken in my resolution by the old sailor's counsel, I returned to London and told my friend Bogardus the foregoing. He allowed that an old sailor was a good authority upon a vessel entirely dependent upon the humor of the winds; but a steamer sets the weather at defiance, if well built and if sailors and engineers understood their duty. He then explained the power of steam in a storm so clearly that I gave up my old sea-hero, and was convinced of the perfect security of the steamer. Dr. Dionysius Lardner, who wrote a book in 1837 to demonstrate the impossibility of ocean-steamers, in 1839 made a passage in one from New York. I took my passage, and in the end of October we put to sea. The next day a heavy westerly storm set in, the rudder was unshipped, a wheel was broken; the bowsprit was



shivered, and part of the bulwarks carried away. The storm lasted nine days, and as we saw no sun, no one could tell our whereabouts. Yet I had never felt more assured. In seaman's phrase, the vessel swam like a duck. One day, in the cabin, a lady said to me, "Good God, Mr. Nolte, you sit there as quietly as if this were all play." "I am really quiet, madam," I replied, "because I feel safe." "God bless your confidence, sir," were her words, as she lay down. The next morning the storm lulled, the necessary repairs were made, and the lady said to me, smiling, "Well, sir, it seems you were quite right, after all." Nine days after, we reached New York. This is the longest recorded passage of a steamer; but then 18 days seemed little to me, compared with my 58 days' voyage in the *Minerva Smyth* in 1816.

In New York I saw again a friend whom I had not met for eleven years—De Rham, head of the first French house there. We had worked together in Nantes in 1804, and had gone together to the United States in 1805. He belonged to the few who have passed forty-eight years of mercantile life in New York with unshaken credit, although not from need but from propriety he stopped payment for five days, in the crisis of 1836. He did so, simply, to assure himself of the impossibility of failure, which greatly amazed New York. He had not one creditor who had sold his paper even at one per cent. discount; and, save the five days' suspension, he showed no sign of weakness.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### NICHOLAS BIDDLE AND THE UNITED STATES BANK.

Wilder, the agent of the house of Messrs. Hottinguer & Co., in Paris and Havre—His intimacy with Nicholas Biddle, the President of the Pennsylvania Bank of the United States—Biddle's project to restore the balance of trade, between England and the United States, to an equilibrium—A colossal operation in cotton, the means for which are obtained by the strength of my own credit—The pitcher goes too often to the well, and is broken at last—Violent conclusion to the enterprise—Imprisonment in New Orleans—Return to the north, overland—Cincinnati—Philadelphia—The adventuress from Florence, my travelling companion to New York—Embarkation for England, on board of the Steamer Great Western—Race between this vessel and its competitor, The British Queen—Classification of the company on board of the two steamers, by Gordon (James Gordon Bennett ?—Trans.), editor of the New York paper, "Morning Herald"—The Great Western wins the race, reaching England three days earlier than the British Queen.

I WANTED very much to go to New Orleans, but was detained in New York longer than I expected, by the attorneys of Hottinguer & Co. of Havre. Mr. Wilder had lived long in Paris, as partner in a New York silk house, in connection with the Lyons silk factories, and we had known each other there. He had a good deal to do with Hottinguer & Co., and had won their confidence by his punctual fulfilment of engagements. He knew me just when I was of the utmost importance as cotton-merchant, not only in America, but in Liverpool and Havre. He had, from what he had seen of me, even after my failure in 1826, conceived a high opinion of me and of my influence with cotton-planters in Louisiana and Mississippi. He was also in the confidence of Nicholas Biddle, who was considered the first financier in America, and who desired to govern the European cotton-market by his

bank influence. He was urged to do this by the uncertain position of American credit in the European markets; because the central point of this commerce was London, where the imports of manufactured goods from France had created a deficit for Americans of from 13 to 15,000,000 dollars. Add to this \$13,000,000 of interest on a debt of \$234,006,648, borrowed by the various states on their own responsibility. In carrying out this project, less was thought of a possible rise in cotton than of losing \$27,000,000, to be annually paid in Europe. The rise of a single penny on the pound on 575,000 bales of 360 lbs. each (the quantity furnished by the crop of 1837--8), would have made a difference of \$11,500,000; the rise of a second penny would reduce the trade-balance against the states to almost nothing. But several things were necessary to effect this rise: First, to strengthen the hands of holders in England, so that they could not be compelled by lack of means to sell; second, to overcome the natural unwillingness of the spinners to pay a higher price for the raw material. Every merchant knows that the spinner is willing to pay a higher price, if he can get the same rise in the prices of his manufactures. This idea did not get into Biddle's head. The advancing consumption of raw material in England for some years back, was proof enough for most Americans of the elasticity of the market. When I came to New York, in November, 1838, he had ended his first attempt to extend the grasp of his ideas in this affair. He had sent persons in autumn, 1837, to Charleston and New Orleans, to buy enormous quantities of cotton on the bank's account, and to ship it to Liverpool and Havre. He had established his eldest son and an old Philadelphia merchant in Liverpool, under the name of Humphreys and Biddle, and to them his cotton was consigned. In Havre, the consignees were Hottinguer & Co., with whose representative Wilder he had come to an understanding, and whose paper was sold through his bank. This colossal affair did very well the first year. At this moment I reached New York and visited Wilder, then in the zenith of his glory. As soon as he saw me, he said, "You are the man who could best have based our operations in New Orleans." I asked if I were too late to take a share at least in the business, and he



said, "Not quite; you are an old friend of our house; I will write to Mr. Biddle; he will see you gladly, and, at any rate, you shall hear from me in New Orleans."

I went to Philadelphia, and was warmly received by Biddle and his brother-in-law, Craig, both of whom I had known very well before. After a couple of days' thought, he decided to make no change in the present course of his business or in his agencies. But he said that I should have every help in my own business from his branch-bank in New Orleans—the Merchants' Bank. These were mere words, but I have never had cause to mistrust him, and have often been helped by the house of Humphreys & Biddle.

I went through Baltimore, Fredericksburg, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Hamburg, and Milledgeville to Mobile. I met many old acquaintances, and was joyfully received in New Orleans. I received from my old comrades an invitation for the festival of January 8, the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, where my health was drank as an old soldier of that day, and as a promoter of commerce. Twenty-four years had elapsed since that day, and had left but few of my old comrades. Among them, however, was my commandant Planché, now a militia general. His love for Jackson was as fiery as ever, and he made a long speech in French, requesting me to translate it to the guests, which I did, though of course, all the fire of the original was lost.

When I left England, Messrs. Barings had promised to keep me informed about the condition of the cotton market, and I soon received letters. The coming crop was, of course, the settling point of the hoped for advance in prices. In England, 1,800,000 bales were reckoned on, and the fixedness of the current price was believed to be sure. The circular of the first fifteen cotton-brokers at the close of the year said, Dec. 31, 1838: "The whole matter rests on the amount of the import and the politics of the American Bank Party, and these are inseparable." The weekly British consumption during the year, was 23,204 bales, and the total stock remaining in Great Britain, was 321,000, or enough for fourteen weeks. The coming crop was therefore of great importance, as there could be no doubt that the consumption would

continue. The smaller the crop, of course the better for the Bank party. At the end of the year, the maximum was set down at 1,700,000 bales at highest. But I, who had had so much experience in cotton, knew certainly, from the best instructed planters, of all the cotton growing States, that the crop would not exceed 1,600,000. I was then told from England, that if it did not surpass a million and a half, there would be an important rise in prices, and if it stopped at 1,400,000 bales, "there was no telling to what rate prices might go." When the crop was gathered in, it furnished but 1,360,000 bales. Only one unforeseeable circumstance occurred to interfere with the Bank plans. Breadstuffs were extraordinarily rare in England; and this, according to the measures of the Bank of England, in such cases, affected the cotton industry. It became necessary to import a great quantity of breadstuffs, and this threatened great difficulties in the money market, as an outlay of £10,000,000 must be made for grain. The quantity of American state paper that had been bought, the sums sent out for cotton, and some monetary difficulties in Belgium and France made a tightness in the English money market positive. Interest rose: money must be paid for bread: foreign exchanges were wanting: instead of strengthening the Bank (of England) by selling out some of its State Paper, the directors determined to require  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest on Exchequer Bills and other paper, which would accumulate such paper in their portfolio, and keep the circulation of their notes in its usual position. On the 28th Feb., 1839, after £2,000,000 ready money had been paid out, the Bank announced its intention of keeping up the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest until April, although the discount price at the Exchange was now 4 or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Without remembering the crisis of 1837, the Bank stuck to this resolve, and on the 28th Feb. 1839, its position was as follows:

ACTIVA.		PASSIVA.	
Portfolio, etc., - -	£21,741,000	Circulation, - - -	£18,098,000
Specie, - - - -	6,773,000	Deposits, - - -	7,759,000
	<hr/>	Reserve funds, - -	2,657,000
	£28,514,000		<hr/>
			£28,514,000

$\frac{1}{3}$  of the Obligations, £8,619,000.

## THREE MONTHS LATER, MAY 28.

Portfolio, &c., - - -	£23,543,000	Circulation, - - -	£18,214,000
Spécie, - - - -	5,119,000	Deposits, - - -	7,814,000
	<hr/>	Reserve funds, - -	2,634,000
	£28,662,000		<hr/>
			£28,662,000

$\frac{1}{3}$  of the Obligations, £8,676,000.

## THREE MONTHS LATER, AUG. 28.

Portfolio, &c., - - -	£25,141,000	Circulation, - - -	£17,982,000
Spécie, - - - -	2,420,000	Deposits, - - -	6,488,000
	<hr/>	Reserve funds, -	3,091,000
	£27,561,000		<hr/>
			£27,561,000

$\frac{1}{3}$  of Obligations, £8,156,666.— $\frac{3}{4}$ .

For every £100 of Obligations (Circulation and Deposits) the Bank only possessed £9 17s. 10d. cash.

In six months the Treasury had lost £4,353,000 in money, £4,400,000 in paper. The poor bread crop had its influence. Nothing could keep money in the country. A suspension of payment was to be looked for: interest was at from 7 to 10 per cent., and the outlay of ready money, at least, £5,729,666.

The result of this and of the dearth was a forced lessening of the consumption of cotton, which now in England amounted to 328,043 bales, of which 241,785 were American. The weekly consumption was now 16,896 bales, instead of 23,204 as in the preceding year. The reader will now understand what follows.

Towards the end of January, Mr. Wilder commissioned me to buy 1,000 bales of cotton, one fifth for myself, and the rest for his friends, making my own venture about \$6,400, of which I must pay \$1600 in cash. I did not possess so much, and was yet unwilling to prevent my re-entrance into this business. These commissions must be attended to without loss of time, or refused. I undertook it. My commissions on the whole purchase reduced my need to \$500, which I hoped to make up in some other way. I told Mr. Wilder that I could combine other affairs like this, if I could make certain regular advances before the goods were shipped, and the bills of lading signed, only that I had no means. If he wanted to go further he must give me the credit. He sent



me a second letter for \$50,000. It was known that the shipment was addressed to my old friends and correspondents, but whether for Mr. Wilder's account or my own was not known. As I also made shipments at the same time, through Alexander Dennistoun & Co., and Mr. Nicholson, partner of James Brown & Co., of Liverpool, with advance, which in consequence of the great concurrence, amounted to  $87\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., it was evident that it could not be all for other people's account; yet no one saw it, or if they did, they kept it silent. The more I bought, the more was offered, and when I said I must refuse from want of money, I was told to take the cotton and pay for it when I got my returns. Two banks also offered advances upon the bills of lading and the policies of insurance: saying that the cotton might remain at the presses, and that the receipts of the press-owners would be taken as equivalents for the policies and the bills of lading, until these were made out. Thus I got means to make advances, although without any capital of my own. I published a couple of circulars, which convinced everybody that a rise in prices was inevitable. A large sale made in England at ninepence strengthened this conviction. It was the case with all that I shipped.

I had not entered into this vortex thoughtlessly. *I must go on* buying, but I had a moral certainty that the net products of all the cotton sold in Liverpool would more than meet any obligations of mine; and so I continued, acting less as mere speculator than as intermediate between furnishers and consumers.

In all my consignments to the Barings, I had requested them, so soon as the sale of the cotton should have realized more than the amount of the advances, to send me credits for it to New York. I wanted them to feel safe, and then I trusted all to the rise in prices, of which I felt so sure. But my calculations and theirs were all deceived. It was not the amount of the crop upon which the price depended; for the dearth of breadstuffs had restricted the consumption of cotton by the spinners to the amount of 4650 bales per week.

At last, a letter from the Barings stopped their advances, as they doubted whether all the shipments would repay them. I must stop the buying. The greatest difficulties arose from the

errors, outstanding payments, etc., which resulted from advancing on cotton, and obtaining these advances on the receipts of the press-owners, with whom it was deposited. For the delayed payments, the cotton yet in the depôts was security for the sellers and factors; but the holders of the receipts upon which the advances were made, also claimed it. Every lawyer in New Orleans was employed, and all was confusion. I collected all who had an interest in the matter—some nine or ten—and showed them the true position of affairs. The reader will be surprised to learn, that in two months and a half 37,000 bales of cotton had passed through my hands. My explanations showed where it had gone; the names of the sellers; the amount of the various purchases; how much had been paid or was due; the European houses to whom it was consigned; the amount of advances made by them; and proved that out of \$1,440,000, reckoning cotton at \$40 per bale, not one dollar had been improperly employed, or had found its way to my pocket. This statement was given to a committee of the persons concerned; whose general idea was that the difficulty was but momentary. When everything had been put upon paper, it was unanimously resolved, that if any profit should finally result, it should be mine.

Now came the point of managing the affair. Who should be trusted? and should payments be made according to the amount claimed by each creditor; or should all be united, and gradually paid, equally? While in this state, the firm of Reid, Irving & Co., London, correspondents of the Citizens' Bank, offered to take and manage the whole affair, giving good guarantees for the debts.

Then appeared single claims upon me personally; the most important being those of the press-owners. I was left in freedom, however, by giving bail that I would not leave the country. One of my bail was an old clerk of mine, whom I had taken, when penniless, in Bayonne, and established in New Orleans. I did not enjoy my freedom long. Some of my bailers, volunteers too, upon whom I had no claim, were advised to retract, and did so; and while I was about getting others, my old clerk, whom for ten years I had protected, trusted, and advanced, followed their exam-

ple. I went to prison. I thought the imprisonment uncalled for, in a place where three and thirty years of labor had won for me, deservedly, the reputation of an honorable man; but fortune held the bitter cup to my lips, and I must drain it to the dregs. There, where I had played so important a part, won such universal confidence, and saved by timely help so many from ruin, I could not expect to be housed with criminals of every sort, and fed with their food, or starve. My counsel, John R. Grymes, convinced of the injustice of my imprisonment, attempted to get me released, and, after a lapse of nine days, succeeded. I went to my house, packed up a few things, and started in a steamer for Louisville. It was twenty-two years since I had been here, yet I found my friend, John S. Snead, in the best circumstances. What twenty-two years can do for an American city is incomprehensible in Europe. In 1810 the population of Cincinnati was 2540, in 1850 it was 119,460.

From Louisville I went to Cincinnati, where I saw in the harbor over sixty steamboats. Seated at the end of the breakfast-table, in the great eating-room of a favorite hotel, a pair of respectable looking gentlemen came in and sate opposite to me. Said one to the other, "Vincent Nolte, of New Orleans, came up by this boat; I don't know where he puts up. Do you know him?"

"A little," was the answer; "he was pointed out to me once in New Orleans."

"Ah! What does he look like?"

"Simple enough; no fuss about him; an open, friendly manner."

"He must be a devil of a fellow. Does he look like a schemer?"

"Not at all," was the reply.

I had finished my breakfast, and it was near the time of embarking; so I took my hat, and bowing to the one who had seen me, said, "I am sorry that you did not recognize me. My name is Vincent Nolte, and I have the honor to bid you good morning." As I went away, he cried, "True, by God, sir. Oh, what a pity! I should have liked to have had a little bit of a chat with you."



Had I remained, there would have been no end of questioning, for which the Americans are notorious. But now they have the indirect method. A common remark is, "I speculate what the fellow may be about."

From Cincinnati, I went by Wheeling, to Baltimore and Philadelphia; where I saw one or two old acquaintances—the navy-agent, John Harrison, the most courteous entertainer, and the possessor of the most elegant and tasteful house in America; and the former minister to Great Britain, Joseph R. Ingersoll. So to New York. My companion was a black-eyed, well-formed Italian lady. She was, I learned, the daughter of a Florentine notary, and had been the mistress of a Polish noble, who lost his life in the revolutionary troubles in Ravenna and Bologna, in the same battle in which Louis Napoleon's elder brother was killed. She fought at his side, in man's clothes, and had a sabre-scar on her forehead. She had come to the United States through Brazil, with a lineal genealogy from the discoverer Americus Vespucci. She had read of Lafayette's reception, and hoped for such another; with which object she visited Washington. But neither Secretary of State nor even one member of Congress would interest himself in the matter; and she, therefore, levied contributions upon the various States. In this, also, she failed. Now and then she got \$1000, but she was an ordinary adventuress, and gained but little. She is now living on a country-seat near Ogdensburg, as mistress of a Hamburger much younger than herself.

The morning after my arrival in New York I went to Wall-street, where I was soon surrounded by fifty or sixty men, desirous of seeing and analyzing the "keenest cotton speculator in America." I was glad to get back to my hotel, the "Globe," where I rested at least until the next day. At breakfast next morning, I read in the New York Herald as follows: "Mr. Vincent Nolte, the celebrated cotton speculator, from New Orleans, has arrived at the Globe Hotel, Broadway." The waiter was called to point out the remarkable man, and for a while I was the mark for the eyes of all the guests; who, when tired of staring, said, "Why, he looks like other people."

In my youth, in 1804, I had played the same part in Peter Godfrey's theatre at Hamburgh, in a piece taken from the English, and called "Notoriety." The character pleased me, and, when alone, I was always declaiming. But as I had never really been the object of a universal stare until now, it was by no means agreeable to me; but I had to bear it, both then and since. I knew Mr. Bennet, the editor of the Herald, and I begged of him to take no further notice of me in his paper, and this he promised. There was a bet for the passage of the 1st of August between the steamers Great Western and British Queen. Thousands of people crowded the wharves. The vessels started, and passed through the Narrows at 1 o'clock, P. M. The passengers had not looked on their newspapers as yet, but when the Sandy Hook Lighthouse had been passed, and the hills of Neversink began to grow dim, the Morning Herald came in play. The leading article said that eight hundred passengers were in the two steamers, and might thus be analyzed:—

$\frac{1}{10}$  worthy, honorable men.

$\frac{2}{10}$  business men, well to do.

$\frac{1}{10}$  unfortunate or ruined business men.

$\frac{1}{10}$  drummers for European houses.

$\frac{1}{10}$  idlers in good circumstances.

$\frac{2}{10}$  speculators and schemers.

$\frac{2}{10}$  blackguards, intriguers, bankrupts, etc.

Then came the list of names. To the first category on board the Great Western belonged General Hamilton, a rich South Carolinian cotton-planter, very influential, and one of the first partisans of Texas, for which state he had bought steamboats for inland navigation and for military service,—a great friend of Biddle's, and now on his road to London to negotiate a loan for Texas.

In the third category stood my name. "Mr. Vincent Nolte," it said, "the giant of cotton speculation, who had the art of getting up great undertakings on small means, and was now on the road to England to turn, with General Hamilton's help, their cotton castles in the air, into realities." Captain Hoskins was required to point out the originals of these two sketches, and did so. All

who were not sea-sick and remained upon deck, soon became acquainted. Most of them were English and American merchants, and some — British officers going home from Canada. Achille Murat, second son of the King of Naples, was also on board; he had quit his South Carolinian cotton plantation to go to Europe and regulate the affairs of his mother, Queen Caroline, recently deceased at Florence. It will be remembered that this lady, who lived long in Trieste, and afterwards in Florence, had yielded to Louis Philippe all claim upon the Chateau de Neuilly, for a rent of 800,000 francs, to descend to her sons. Murat was a good-natured, jovial fellow, who had forgotten all about his princely youth, and gave promise of being enormously fat, fatter than Lablache. The monopoly of the conversation was held by the British officers, and their favorite topics were Wellington and Waterloo. Murat listened attentively, and then broke out suddenly with the assertion that, had his father led the French Cavalry at Waterloo, he would have eaten up the Marquis of Anglesea and his troops, and won the fight. This was the usual end of the discussion. Then Murat would walk up and down with his hands behind his back, like his uncle, and finally go to the British officers and say, "*Allons, messieurs; buvons un coup à la bonne amitié.*"—The British Queen lost the race by 22 hours.

Daily intercourse with General Hamilton made me acquainted with his projects about the prices of cotton. Trusting to the Bank of the United States and the financial capacity of its President, Nicholas Biddle, to form a committee in some central point for the cotton-growing states, who should keep acquainted with the condition of the European cotton markets, the consumption, stock, etc.; and also secure all the crops, so that there could be no doubt as to the result, the planters were to be informed of the effect of the condition of the markets upon the relative worth of cotton; and those who were not willing to sell at the stated price, should receive advances from the bank, and give the sale to the committee's agents. By this means it was hoped to make prices regular and steady. I doubted the feasibility of this plan, but I could not refuse Hamilton's offer to be the head of this com-



mittee, as he expressed so much confidence in my ability. That, however, was to be settled on our return to the States ; for I had determined to go back to New Orleans, being convinced that no man but myself, especially no bank-committee could carry on the liquidation. We determined the day of our return, and I went to Paris to pass a few weeks with my family.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### LAST VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES.

Return to America by way of England—Attempt there to grasp at and seize a shadow—The intended rejection by the house of Hottinguer & Co., at Paris, of the bills of the United States Bank, is communicated to me beforehand, when taking leave, by Mr. Hottinguer himself—An interesting acquaintanceship formed on the way to Boulogne—I embark at Liverpool on board of the steamer Liverpool Packet, which brings over the first protest of the drafts on the Hottinguer firm—Arrival in New York—General effect of Hottinguer's measures—The United States Bank suspends specie payments, and so gives the signal for other banks to do the same—Dissolution of the project which had been rejected by General Hamilton—I resolve to bid the West a final farewell, and to try my fortune, in the to me, as yet, unknown East—I return to Europe in the packet-ship England—Remarkable career of Captain Williams—London and Paris—The establishment of a commercial company in Venice draws me to that city, on an express invitation from the parties concerned—A sad year in my life—My acquaintanceship with the painter Nerly is my best consolation—I visit Trieste in hope of better fortune.

THE time for my departure arrived, and the night before, I called upon Mr. Henry Hottinguer, now head of the firm. Said he, "You will take back with you a bit of news that will astonish the good people there." "What is it?" said I. "That to-morrow morning we shall let the paper of the United States Bank be protested." "That is an astonishing item." "Yes," he said, "it will do more than surprise them; it will terrify them." "And the amount?" I asked. "Some millions of francs," was the answer.

He now told me that further connection with the Bank was impossible, inasmuch as it had surpassed the limit given by his firm for advances on cotton and credits. The understanding between his firm and the Barings removed all doubt about the

worth of American paper sent to him direct from Philadelphia, or by the Bank Agent in London, Samuel Jaudon, as guarantees for the enormous advances. As long as his firm had felt secure, they had been ready to support the bank operations with cash and credit; but the moment of distrust had arrived. The cause of all this was the limitless vanity of Nicholas Biddle, who two years before had, by prudence and clearness saved American credit, in the crisis of 1836-7, and the American mercantile world from ruin. The gratitude of the houses thus saved was limitless, and Biddle was always received with joy in New York, and throughout the States he was hailed as the greatest financier of the day, and the Savior of commerce. The height to which he mounted made him dizzy: he fancied that his popularity and his moneyed influence could lift him to the presidential chair. To win the South, he made enormous advances to the cotton planters. His last measure for popularity was this: there was no American holder of the whole \$5,000,000 loan to the State of Mississippi. Planters are naturally unpunctual, and this begot public distrust. Then Biddle took the whole loan, reckoning on his influence and the indorsement of his bank to procure money from the capitalist. When he saw, however, that he had reckoned without his host, he determined to offer a part of it to Hottinguer & Co., as equivalent for the Bank exchanges. The French firm, however, already a little nervous, had resolved to get rid of the whole burden, to let the Bank paper be protested, and to send back the Mississippi paper. The news of this soon reached New York, but Biddle and his friends treated it as a bagatelle.

I went by Boulogne to England, and in the *coupée* of the diligence I met a well-looking man, somewhat forward in manner. The more we conversed the more I liked him. There was no circumstance about which he could not talk well; no Parisian of whom he had not some trait to describe or anecdote to tell, wittily and piquantly. He was equally informed as to the state of parties, and interested me very much. He had many curious details of persons high in place, as the Duke of Orleans, the English Ambassador, Baron James Rothschild, and other notables of the Parisian Jockey Club, on the Boulevard Montmartre. As



we neared Boulogne, I expressed a hope that he was going to England. "No," he said, "I am to wait at Boulogne." "For some high acquaintance?" I asked. "No," he said, "for my tradesmen, who are coming to offer me goods very cheaply." He saw, perhaps, some astonishment in my face, and said, "You are astonished that I should know so well all the distinguished people of Paris. It is easily explained—I am their tailor." "What," I said, "Monsieur Blain, rue d'Amboise?" "Yes," he answered, "and I see that you have heard of me; I am worth talking about, am I not?" I assented, and never having met so amiable a tailor, I invited him to sup with me at Boulogne, which invitation he accepted. As soon as I reached London, I paid a short visit to the Barings, and then on to Liverpool to the steamer. I found General Hamilton on board, and in fifteen days we reached New York. At Sandy Hook, the pilot informed us that the Bank of the United States had failed. As soon as I had set foot on shore, I saw that the Bank was the topic of universal conversation, and that confidence in Biddle was gone. Mr. Wilder said, that the difficulty was but temporary, and that the papers sent back by Hottinguer, would all be paid, as equivalents were now on their way from Havre here.

I had at once informed the Citizens' Bank, New Orleans, of my return, and my willingness to aid them in the liquidation, if they desired it, and would secure me my personal freedom. I waited for the answer a month, and then learned that the two creditors who had imprisoned me in New Orleans, were on their way to attach me again in New York. I was advised to go to Canada or Europe, and chose the latter, as Hamilton's project could now come to nothing.

The packet ship England, Captain Wait, in which I sailed, was lost upon her next voyage, and left no trace. The fate of seafaring men is peculiar and often inexplicable. I have often recalled Wieland's line,

"What hand shall guide us through this gloom?"

My friend Adam Hodgson, of whom I have often spoken, had visited the United States, and returned in the Albion, Captain

Williams. The ship was the best of packets; the Captain the best sailor, and the most agreeable man in the world, and Mr. Hodgson was so delighted, that as a souvenir, he sent Captain Williams a splendid copy of Falconer's Shipwreck. The Captain thanked him, but his countenance fell as he said, "I wish you had chosen some other book. I have never seen this but with a feeling of painful recollection of my poor father, who was lost at sea, and I have always had a presentiment that the same fate would be my own." One year after, the ship, her master, crew, and passengers, with one or two exceptions, were lost on the coast of Kildare. One of these exceptions was a consumptive Philadelphian named Evans, who had never left his berth since he got on board. He was torn by the waves from the shattered ship, and borne towards the rocks upon the shore, passed twenty-two hours in the water, and was found at last nearly naked. Yet two years ago, he was living and in good health.

In London I visited only Messrs. Bernouilli and Barings, from whom I got letters of recommendation to various Mediterranean ports; to Grant & Co. in Leghorn, and their branches in Genoa and Trieste. Then I went to Paris, where I spent the winter in endeavoring by correspondence to arrange a settled future. James and John Grant, the heads of the firm, were five or six years older than I, and, having known me in Leghorn, were the more ready to help me, and to look about for some proper position for me; no easy matter—for clerks past sixty years of age are seldom sought after. The Grants' establishment had stood for forty years creditably and honorably. The friendship of the Barings, which they had always possessed, was the cause of their extended business, and also the immense American consignments that they had received; added to which was their own local influence and cleverness. These worthy men possessed little or none of that mercantile elasticity which enables one to rise from under the pressure that must often be felt in a forty years' mercantile course. A combination of lucky circumstances had given the firm an unexpectedly high rank among Mediterranean houses; but, as soon as the luck changed, they sank back to their old position, and lost much of their influence. What induced me to cultivate their

friendship was, that they were the best-informed people about houses of their own kind and the manner of establishing them—an object never to be lost sight of, and which is the great essential to the merchant. If he gain it sooner than he expected, he can either rest or extend his views; and if he choose the latter, he must think no more of falling back, but ever go steadily on. The old rule: “that if one rope break, another must be lying ready,”—holds good here. Hence comes the necessity, in the present age of commerce, to dismiss the “granny-system” of our fathers. When all goes forward, man can neither delay nor pause altogether.

The Messrs. Grant put me in the way of getting the secretaryship of a new commercial association in Venice. A letter from Messrs. Holmes & Co., in that city, informed me that they awaited my presence to give me positive information; so I quitted Paris, and by the Simplon and Milan I reached Venice with letters to the directors of the society. I met with a most polite and friendly reception, particularly from Francesco Zucchelli and Giacomo Levy. At last, one of the directors told me in strict confidence, that the post had already been given away even while I was still in Paris, although Mr. Holmes was utterly ignorant of the fact. The choice had been a good one, Mr. H. B. Bremer, formerly connected with the house of Buschek, in Trieste, who had been backed by the house of Baur in Altona. It was long before I found the key to the mystification practised towards me. It was that by the systematic organization of such a society, as the projected one, the directors themselves knew nothing, but that the lead was to be taken by an experienced business man, to import cotton from the United States, and sugar from Havana and Brazil; and that the places were to be given to the superfluous clerks of the various merchants engaged in the association. As there were many candidates, the directors, with the exception of Mr. Holmes, agreed that the candidates for book-keeper, cashier, &c., should be named by their employers, but that the business man was to be looked for by all the directors. Among these, Mr. Friederich Oerle, from Augsburg, but a resident of Venice, procured from



Messrs. Bauer, in Trieste, the successful candidate. Thus again some months were wasted—a great loss for an old man.

The little means which I had in Venice were growing smaller every day, and I could find nothing to do. I was ready to take anything: I perfectly knew four languages, and I was at last reduced to make translations of MSS., from and into English, for the monks of San Lorenzo, who had received lately an English inheritance. This supported me for four months, and then the need returned. For months, I lived on bread and cheese, with a couple of glasses of vile red wine, a-day. Mournful as was my condition, the thought of suicide which used to tempt me, never came to me now. The Venetian air breathed repose, and a sort of sympathy to the unfortunate; the still lagoons by moonlight were of themselves a consolation. Seated alone, beneath a willow on the piazzetta, with my eyes on the blue cloudless heaven, I felt at peace, for I knew that if this sorrow were the meed of many a folly, many a heedless step, it was yet not the punishment of dishonor.

In the recollections of this time, the pleasantest is, of the hours passed with my honest, kind friend, Nerly, and his amiable wife. He who visited Venice, without seeing Nerly in his studio, has sinned against Art. Nerly was born in Erfurt; where he fell in with that great friend of art, Baron von Rumohr, who saw his talent for painting, and sent him to Italy. He soon succeeded in Rome, where he had settled. He first became known by some pictures painted for Thorwaldsen; and orders soon came from the highest sources, Ludwig of Bavaria and others. He was the darling of all the German painters in Rome and its neighborhood, who called him their General, and surrounded him in his rides in the Campagna.

On such occasions he wore a hussar cloak and a shako à la Poniatowski. I saw him first in the caves of Cervara near Rome, frequented by him and his companions in the year 1835. I saw him then, but I did not make his acquaintance until five years later at Mr. Holmes'. There he fell in love with a gentleman's mistress,—the gentleman being the Marquis Marruzzi, a large proprietor in St. Mark's Place. The lady had seen his picture,

and wanted to know him. She suddenly discovered a talent for painting, and her protector procured Nerly to instruct her. He fell in love with her, and the result was marriage. The great painter, Robert Fleury, in Paris, got his wife, a lady of high rank, in the same way. In Nerly's studio I forgot some of my misery. The pictures of the celebrated Canaletti, renowned for his Venetian scenes, have deservedly obtained high praise; but he is surpassed by the English Stanfield and by Nerly. These two stand side by side for truthfulness with Landseer; for, as his animals appear to live, so their groups and landscapes seem to be nature herself. Nerly's best picture, copied by him four or five times, is "Titian's departure from his birthplace, and his separation from his relatives." It is now in Lord Ashburton's possession, at the Grange in Hampshire.

The summer of 1840 was hot. I had a very good little room in the quarter of the Holy Apostles, near the Propaganda and the Rialto, where I did not suffer from heat nor from the cries of the gondoliers on the canal. On the 15th of August, at noon, there was a heavy thunder-storm, and a tremendous crash led me to suppose that the lightning had struck somewhere in my neighborhood. I had hardly recovered when in rushed my boot-black, saying that the lightning had struck the Propaganda. "*Ebbene*," said he, "*la Saetta sapete cosa vuol dire!*" "No," I answered. "*La Saetta vuol dire quaranta cinque. E uno.*" He meant that the lightning in the lottery almanack bears the number 45—that's one. "To-day," said he, "then, is the 15th—that's two; and I am," he continued, "just 39 years old—that's three." "Very good," said I; but how does it concern me?" "Now," said he, "if we take a lottery-ticket with the three numbers, 15, 39, 45, we shall be sure to draw a prize. Please give me a *scudo*." The fellow spent all he could get in the lottery, leaving wife and children to take care of themselves. I refused him the money, and the next day the whole three numbers turned up prizes.

As the winter approached, my fate looked darker and darker, but at last a little ray of light appeared. Conversation generally fell upon the costliness and worthlessness of Venetian hotels, and it was proposed among the merchants to form a Tontine. I ob-

tained the formation of this association ; chose the ground ; was introduced to a good architect by the advocate Mengaldo, and made the proper calculations ; all which kept me busy for six months. When the count was prepared, I took it to Francesco Zuchelli, Giacomo Levy, Mr. Mondolfo, and other capitalists. Mr. Mondolfo's brother, who was interested in the Revoltella hotel, in Trüske, and others, was informed of the affair, and he proposed to unite the two associations. But as people wanted to see the affair successful before they subscribed, and much time was being lost, I went to Trieste.

I knew nobody there but Grant, Brother & Co. ; but a Hamburg friend introduced me to Messrs. Meticke & Prey, who promised to aid me, and did so.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### MY JOURNEY TO THE BLACK SEA.

Propositions of the house of Grant, Brothers & Co. to secure their claims against the house of James and John Cortazzi, at Odessa—The puerility of these gentlemen—I set out, and travel to Galatz, by way of Vienna and the Danube, descending the latter river—The baths of Mehadia—Galatz—Continuation of my journey to Odessa by land, in company with one of the many Princes Galitzin—Jassy—The Russian Consul General at that place—Son of the tragic writer, Kotzebue—The Quarantine of Skulieni—Kitschenew—Potemkin's grave—Odessa—James Cortazzi—The President of the Tribunal of Commerce—A Cossack named Gamaley, Cortazzi's friend and debtor, serves me, at last, as a means for the liquidation of the debt to the house of Grant & Co.—The passport system in the southern Russian ports—Prince Woronzow—The travelling Yankee, Codman; the first only half-witted American I ever met with in my life.

I HAD been but a few weeks in Trieste when the Messrs. Grant requested me to go for them to Odessa, on the Black Sea; as neither Mr. Hay nor Mr. More, members of the firm, were willing to go—one for household reasons; the other for fear of being kept too long.

Messrs. James and John Cortazzi of Odessa, who were connected with the Grants, in Trieste, Leghorn, and Genoa, had received very heavy advances for consignments of wheat taken by the Grants. The advances sometimes passed the assigned limits—the shipments of wheat never; so that the Cortazzis soon got heavily into debt. After this, came failures in sending shipments. At last, the Grants received an order to insure the Cortazzis' ship Alexander, and her cargo, for a heavy sum. This was done; but the ship delayed, and delayed, and finally ceased to be heard of, until Mr. Grant, one day, read in a Marseilles newspaper this announce-

ment, "Arrived. The Russian ship Alexander, with wheat to Messrs. Archias & Co." He wrote to Marseilles, and was answered that the vessel had been sent by the Cortazzis; and that Messrs. Archias had returned acceptances for more than her full value. Letter after letter went to Odessa, but no answer was returned. John Cortazzi, who had large credit with the London corn-exchange, had received heavy advances for supplies of provisions: Mr. John Hornley, head of that Liverpool firm, had married a Cortazzi: John Cortazzi's wife was a Miss Hornley, and by this alliance he had got into the confidence of the great corn-merchants, particularly Joseph and Charles Sturge of Birmingham. To see what could be saved for them, the Grants now sent me to Odessa.

As soon as I got the necessary papers, I started with the Vienna courier. These papers, my passport, and bank-notes for a hundred gilders, were in a pocket-book in the left breast-pocket of my coat. I sat next the courier, who asked for my passport, which I gave him, and then put back the pocket-book. When we reached Bruck I missed it, and all search was vain; for the street was filled with Bohemian musicians returning from the annual market. I reported to the police in Bruck, and wrote to Messrs. Grant that I would wait at Vienna for new papers. Fortunately I had my United States passport.

I was glad of the delay in Vienna, which I had never seen before, and which is a delightful residence for strangers. I took a steamer down the Danube to go by Galatz, Jassy, Bessarabia, and Russia Minor, to Odessa. The same evening we reached Presburg. I could not pass the battle-ground of Wagram, by which Napoleon won a bride from the ancient House of Hapsburg, without recalling those troublous days. But the rapid change of scene made me forget Napoleon and Wagram long before we got to Presburg. At Pesth we found the annual fair; the sun was burning, and the deck of the steamer packed with passengers. One of the directors, who was on board, refused to push the speed of the boat, because it would need more coal than usual; and we did not reach Pesth until sunset, and saw the fair. There were at least 20,000 strangers, and 15,000 wagons laden

with all sorts of things. There were no traces of the inundation of 1838, which had destroyed 2,000 houses, and which occurred again three years later. We saw the preparation for the iron bridge of 1,500 feet, from Pesth, so often projected by the Viennese banker, Baron Sina.

Early next morning, after a visit to dusty Ofen, we went on. Among the passengers was a Prince Galitzin, with his friend and secretary Wailly, a young French literateur, son of the Professor, and author of a celebrated grammar. We three formed a coterie, as most of the others were Polish Jews. The young prince lived in Paris, and was travelling now because all Russian subjects are obliged to return every two years, and because he had a rich uncle living near Moscow, whose heir he was.

We staid a day to unload at Alt Orsova, which gave me an opportunity of seeing the Baths of Mehadia. They are on the shores of the Czerna, about five miles off, and the road leads through the rich and charming meadows of the Danube, sprinkled with ruins of an ancient aqueduct with arches 35 feet high. The village of Mehadia is in one of the lowest valleys in Europe, where Trajan's aqueduct-arches still are seen. You bathe in what is left of the Roman temples to Hercules and Esculapius, and the walks are full of taste, and beautifully picturesque; and he who does not visit it when he can, loses a great pleasure.

In the morning, flat boats were ready to take us to New Orsova, and to the Iron Gate, through whose tall, rocky sides the turbulent Danube, shrunk to 200 feet in width, must pour his impatient floods, and where great care and skill are needed on the part of the boatmen. On the other side of the gate we found another steamboat, which carried us to Galatz, by Widdin, Giurgewo, and Silistria, and Ibraily, famous for its grain. Here I hoped to find a decent conveyance to Jassy; but the Russian post-coach is a basket on four wheels, in which your trunk must serve as seat. Eight horses about the size of Newfoundland dogs were harnessed to this. The driver was fastened on somewhere in front, and, having paid in advance for the journey of thirty leagues to Jassy, and taken a receipt, away we went at a gallop, the postillion never looking round. When the horses are used up, more are instantly caught



from the steppes and harnessed, and the gallop goes ever forward. Your only refreshment is a glass of water, begged in the hut of some Moldavian Jew. Woe to you if you speak no Russian, for the postillion speaks nothing else. An Englishman, the second time he made this journey, fired a pistol at his postillion's ear, as a substitute for Russian, when he wanted him to stop. Prince Galitzin, who had brought his own carriage, was obliged with twenty-four horses.

A letter from Mr. Grant introduced me to the British Consul Cunningham, a former clerk of Messrs. Grant. When he came to see me off, and looked at my basket and eight ponies, he said, "By God, no! "That will not do. You must take my little travelling carriage." He sent at once for this—a nice commodious carriage for two people, and expressed his intention of going on one stage with me, to see that I got my relay. "Why," I said, "I have a receipt." "Yes," he answered. "Yet if a government courier should appear, and want horses, and there were none in the stable, he would just coolly take yours. That sort of affair, however, is not done to a British Consul, thanks to Lord Palmerston." Accordingly, he accompanied me for a couple of leagues, and then went back to Galatz.

Three leagues further I was overtaken by Galitzin, and he made me exchange seats with his Secretary, who, being a young man, he said, could better support fatigue. In the evening we reached Jassy, and had our passports *viséed* by the Russian Consul-General, who was son of the dramatist Kotzebue, and had a pretty wife from Manheim. There was a quarantine of fourteen days at Skulieni, two leagues from Jassy; but people were allowed to spend ten days of it at the last named place. He told us that his house was always open to us. He gave us a dinner at his country seat, and two parties at his town house. I pleased him by my familiarity with his father's plays; and when I left he gave a sketch of the monument at Manheim, made by his wife. He wrote upon this—" *Souvenir d'Amitié*. I arrived at Skulieni in the evening, during a frightful rain, and was told that the Lazaretto door was closed. I said to one of the officers, who spoke French, that it could make no difference whether I were received

now or in the morning. He consulted with the others, and then, shrugging his shoulders, said he could not break the rule. No inn for shelter was in the neighborhood, and I ran the risk of spending the night in the rain. When Prince Galitzin came up, however, his influence opened the doors for both.

We passed into the visitation room, where we were directed, I first, to strip to shirt and trowsers, and to pass into the next room. Here I found four or five colossal Russian officers, and as many *employés*, and was ordered to strip altogether, and, in a state of complete nudity, to swear, that for fourteen days I had approached neither man nor woman whom I suspected to have the *plague*! This oath was to be sworn upon the cross of St. Andrew, which lay upon the floor, and, with some little anger, I turned my back to the officers as I stooped to pick it up. I was then furnished with clean warm water, and flannel, linen shirts, drawers, and a nightgown, and shown to my quarters. My young prince, who had seen this form of an oath, swore hotly that he would never submit; but prince or no prince, he was obliged to do it. When we got into our own room, we burst into uncontrollable laughter. So we spent our four days of quarantine.

I went on in my little carriage towards Kischenew, through woods and mountain passes. We had gone up some seven leagues without any sign of a high road being visible: and my postillion was perfectly ignorant of the country and the way. At last, I saw in the distance a naked hill, crowned by a monument, and with a hut at its base. We inquired there, and learned that it was here that Potemkin, Catherine's favorite, lost his life on his way from the Crimea to Jassy. His niece, Princess Branitzka, who accompanied him, had this monument erected. It was said that Catherine had poisoned him; but it cannot be true, for, save his niece, he was alone. How much does the recollection of Potemkin's former greatness teach of the littleness of human things, when one stands in this barren and unvisited desert at the foot of his monument. His niece would have perpetuated his memory by this monument, forgetting that it must be seen to be known. Yet here now lies the dust of one, who was plotting to rob his mighty mistress of her sceptre and her crown.

I recalled a journey over the Alleghanies in 1811 and 1812, and as then, I now made a map of the route indicated by the guardian of the monument, with a lead pencil, on a bit of paper, making the cross-road with a cross, and the turn off with a semicircle, and so got to Kischenew about eight, P. M. The morning view of this place gave me an idea of the Russian military government. All the city officers were military men, and the more I saw of them, the more my heart beat for the free air of America, whose civilization, though left to grow alone, had so far surpassed that founded by Peter the Great. Two days later I reached Odessa, and got my first glimpse of the Black Sea, through incomparable clouds of dust.

I had heard of *Boulevard de Paris*, a *Rue*, and a *Hôtel Richelieu* in Odessa, and I went to the Hotel St. Petersbourg, in the neighborhood of the French named streets. Having leased my empty rooms, and hired my furniture, as is the custom here, I looked about the city. I soon met an acquaintance, Mr. Peter Poel of Hamburg, whom I had last seen in Paris in 1824, who had married a niece of the Petersburg banker Stieglitz, and was at the head of a branch house here. He could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw me in Odessa. When I told him my business, he invited me that day to dinner, where, he said, I would meet James Cortazzi, and make arrangements for settling my business. I had formed a more correct opinion of Cortazzi than Mr. Poel, who had known him many years, and I therefore refused the invitation, and visited Cortazzi the next morning. He had heard of my arrival at Mr. Poel's, and was quite embarrassed, although he affected to conceal it by a cavalier manner. I asked him whether he was willing to pay the debt. He objected to moving too fast or slow in the matter; he would talk to me when he had received certain letters from England—say in a week. The week gone, he disappeared, had gone to the country, his clerks said, for ten days. So passed three weeks without any result. In the meantime I learned that, according to commercial law at Odessa, I could get a judgment, but could not compel payment. A merchant could be reduced to bankruptcy only when he refused his own acceptances, or when he had sold drafts upon foreign houses which should



come back dishonored, and he should refuse to refund expenses. In these two cases, if he cannot instantly satisfy all his obligations, he is *ipso facto* bankrupt. In all other circumstances he is simply a debtor, and the clearest book-debt cannot break him.

Cortazzi came back very much disinclined for an interview. The Cossack President of the Commercial Court, Gamaley, was a close friend of Cortazzi, as well as his debtor for 20,000 rubles. I did not expect justice from him, but as we were on friendly terms I told him of Cortazzi's dishonest course, and suggested that I should esteem him quite as dishonest, should he decide in Cortazzi's favor in case of a suit. He spoke accordingly to his creditor, but got nothing from him but empty promises; I determined to begin my suit, only there were no lawyers in Odessa who understood their profession. But I myself drew up in French, as was allowed in Odessa, a memoir, of which I sent a copy to every member of the Tribunal of Commerce. When the cause was heard, it was decided in my favor, so that I had the judgment, but how to get it paid by this mercantile thief I knew not; but my acquaintance with Poel helped me here. Gamaley was Poel's debtor precisely to the amount of his debt to Cortazzi, and Poel suggested to Gamaley the necessity of showing me at least justice. Gamaley brought me a proposal from Cortazzi which I sent back, as I did also the second, but he succeeded at last and invited me to meet Cortazzi. When Cortazzi said, "I will sign the document to-morrow, there is my hand;" I replied, "The pressure of an honest man's hand is worth something, but you have deceived me so often that I will trust nothing but your signature." As he drew back grumbling, I asked Gamaley if he had heard what I said, and told him that if his word, already thrice broken, were again violated, I would tell the whole story upon the public exchange. I had chosen the right way; both Gamaley and Cortazzi were rogues, and nothing but this threat would have procured the signature of the latter. The next morning Gamaley requested me to call upon him, and when I entered the room he held the proposal out to me saying, "There, my dear friend, is what you wanted. I hope you are now content, and that you will confess that I worked well for you." I saw Cortazzi's

signature, but the document still lacked Gamaley as witness. I pointed out the necessity of this, and he signed.

My business was ended. The manner in which the Exchange at Odessa had regarded the whole affair proved that Cortazzi, like every other merchant of his class, had taken no unusual course to get out of his difficulties, and that he had lost only foreign credit and not his credit at Odessa. People congratulated me, saying that I was the first creditor who had ever recovered any debt, except from foreign exchange and paper. That I had taken the best course was proven by the words of John Cortazzi, when he visited the Grants at Trieste on his return from England nine months later. The Grants told him that they expected very little more from him. "You may esteem yourselves very lucky," he said, "in getting what you did; for if Mr. Nolte had not frightened my brother, you would have gotten nothing."

The agents of the Birmingham house, who had gone to see about their advances to Odessa, wondered how I could have gotten anything from such a nest of robbers.

I next went to the police for my passport, but was informed that it had been sent to St. Petersburg, and that I must wait three months in Odessa for its return or else take a Russian pass. As this would have been useless beyond the frontier, I called on Prince Woronzow to whom Mr. Poel had introduced me, and begged his help; and he gave me a written order to the police for a search after my passport, which was found at last in a chest. Ordinarily they are not returned from St. Petersburg for three months.

General Woronzow, commanding the army of the Caucasus, was now in his sixty-fourth year. I called to thank him. He spoke English as well as if he had studied it at Oxford, and had married his first wife, Lady Pembroke, in England. On my introduction he had invited me to a soiree at his palace at the end of the Boulevard de Paris; and now to another at his hermitage near Sevastopol. At this time the Grand Duchess Helena, daughter of Prince Paul of Wurtemberg, lately deceased in Paris, and wife of the Grand Duke Michael, was in Odessa on her way to some baths in the Crimea. The princess wanted to get a whole-

sale idea of the commerce of Odessa, and ordered all the wheat-laden wagons to be drawn up side by side in the main street. Thus several thousand had collected, waiting for the arrival of the lady. All the water carts also, which supplied drinking water to the city, were ordered to occupy themselves in laying the dust. It was of no importance that the market was in want of wheat, and the citizens in want of water; they had to wait five days, and then the princess arrived. On the next day she went on board the fleet, and the wagons were then ordered to come in and unload, and the water carts to return to their usual business. When the owners asked for compensation for their six days' loss, they were sent to the devil, and told to hold their tongues, and this is Russian justice.

The vessel that carried the princess, brought back, on its return, a young American named Codman, in charge of the police. He was from Marblehead, Mass., and had come out as supercargo. He had excited the attention of the police by his habit of asking questions and popping the answers down in a note-book, etc.; and they were ordered to bring him before the Emperor. He was a right inquisitive Yankee. The Czar asked the object of his visit, and his intentions, when his business was ended. He replied that he wanted to see Russia for himself that he might tell his countrymen the truth about it. The *naïveté* of the young man pleased the Czar, who the Marquis de Custine has shown, is very anxious to hide Russian tyranny and slavery from foreigners, and to cause a belief in advanced civilization. Here was an opportunity to get the Americans. "So," said the Czar, "You want to see and learn all about Russia? Well, you shall, and at my expense. I will give you letters and see that you are everywhere well received. Where do you want to go first?" "To Moscow." "When?" "The day after to-morrow, at 6 o'clock." "Good! the day after to-morrow, at 6 o'clock, I will send for you; be ready."

This narrative I got from Codman himself. The next morning appeared at the Yankee's door a very handsome drosky and horses, with an imperial coachman and two adjutants. Servants in imperial livery loaded another drosky with his baggage; the



adjutants got into a third, and he was whirled off to Moscow and put into a second rate hotel. He had scarcely arrived when the Governor and all his staff appeared and offered to do the honors of the city. When he had seen all the lions he asked to go to the Crimea and visit the camp of the army of the Caucasus. He was sent there by the Governor, and so brought to Sevastopol by the flag-ship of the Russian Admiral. Here he wanted to go to headquarters to "see the fun." The Admiral, named, I think, Etschernicheff, who had been a midshipman of Nelson at Trafalgar, and who saw nothing in his passenger but an uneducated curious individual, got rid of him at Sevastopol. But he had nothing to do there and asked to see the camps. He was told that the commandant, Goloffkin, had refused entrance to strangers, etc., but he did not care. The Czar had promised him admission everywhere and he would complain to him if the field-marshal refused. He grew more and more insolent every day, and was so overbearing that there came a sudden order from imperial headquarters to send him to Odessa, and thence over the frontiers, with some money for his expenses, and the wish for a pleasant journey to him. How he got to Trieste, I did not learn, but he told me his story there, and proved that favors do not always come to intelligent men, since this crazy pate had met with such attention. He did not feel a bit grateful nor did he make any attempt at procuring useful information. All that he talked about was his personal intercourse with Nicholas and the fact that his Majesty had been kinder to him than to any other traveller.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE RETURN TO TRIESTE—

Departure from Odessa—The Bosphorus—Constantinople and the Golden Horn—The Turkish fleet—Smyrna—Three weeks' quarantine at Malta—Sicily—Naples—Comparison of the impression produced by the Bay of Naples with that I felt at my first sight of New York Bay—Continuation of my return-journey to Trieste, by way of Leghorn, Genoa, and Venice—Trieste—The house of J. C. Ritter & Co.—My position in it—The district-governor, Count Stadion—Some characteristic sketches of him.

I STARTED from Odessa for Constantinople in a Russian steamer, officered by Englishmen, and in forty-four hours reached the Bosphorus. Here we were detained by a fog, which cleared off at sunset and showed, by the high hills upon the left, to be near Ungiar-Skelessi, where the famous peace was made between Turkey and Russia, and Field-Marshal Diebitch obtained the object of his march across the Balkan. This treaty forbid to French and English vessels entrance to the Black Sea or passage through the Bosphorus, a measure which remained for some years incomprehensible to those two nations.

I had heard so much of the wondrous beauty of the Bosphorus that I was prepared to be disappointed, but what I now saw surpassed every account. A Russian officer, a fellow passenger, gazed at the lovely shores and only spoke to say, "It is too beautiful! We *must* have that." It was the hidden but long cherished wish of his government. The windings of the Bosphorus showed us many a glorious sight. The northeast wind that had blown for five days and that had helped us through the Black Sea, had prevented the shipping from going up the Dardanelles, and there lay before us two hundred and thirty vessels. Scarcely had we entered the strait which separates Europe from Asia

when a light south wind came up and permitted the various vessels to make sail. And the flitting of the white sails among the exquisite scenery had a magical effect. I do not feel called upon to describe what so many better pens have done, but I ought to speak of the effect upon myself. The fairy-like view of the panorama that unrolled before us was greatest as we neared Bujukdere and Therapia on the right, and Scutari on the left or Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, towards which we looked, over Pera Galata and Constantinople. Over the hundreds and hundreds of great and small dwellings, mosques, minarets, kiosks, and cypresses which cover the hill tops near Therapia and the shores below, we saw the new palace of the Sultan, built by English architects, and of which the white walls and delicate fretwork made it look as if built of cards.

From the entrance to the Golden Horn, a bay that separates Constantinople from old Stamboul, to the palace in Therapia, lay twenty-two ships-of-the-line, just come from Mehemet Ali, most prominent among them the flag-ship Mahomet, commanded by the Admiral, an Englishman named Walker. From every mast swung flags, an hundred cannons roared salutes, and the bay was covered with thousands of caiques, as is the case whenever the Sultan goes to Mosque by water, furnishing a spectacle that far surpasses the famed Venetian regatta.

I found several young Englishmen in the Hotel d'Angleterre, upon the heights of Pera, near the new, gorgeous palace of the Russian Embassy. Among them was the son of my London solicitor, Mr. Landford, a well educated, clever young man, who was going with several other Englishmen from Scutari by land along the shores of the Bosphorus to the Black Sea. I went with them to the heights of Ungiar-Skelessi, on one of which is the grave of the prophet Jonah, measuring eight feet by five, and suggesting vast dimensions for the whale that swallowed him.

Then I went to Bourgurloo, from whence can be seen the southern entrance to the Bosphorus, both shores of the Golden Horn, the Prince Islands, the Tower of Leander, the sea of Marmora, and the Dardanelles. With me was the third son of Mehemet Ali an odd informed young man, with a streak of French



politeness about him towards us, although he was haughty and peremptory towards the Turks.

After a three weeks' stay I left Constantinople, to which the palm must be given over all European or American scenery known to me. A French steamer took me to Smyrna, and soon to Malta, where we passed twenty-two days in the Lazaretto. In Smyrna we had taken another passenger, the son of Lord Somers, who succeeded to that earldom before we reached Malta. He was a young, cultivated man, who had thoroughly travelled Asia Minor, discovered mines and cities, to which Fellowes and other travellers had gone, and had filled his portfolios with admirable views and sketches. We were very good friends in the Lazaretto. At the end of our quarantine he set out for England, to be present at the opening of Parliament, but determined to visit Asia Minor as soon as the ceremony was over. Next year I met with him in Trieste, on his road to the East. I was glad to leave the hot, dry climate of Malta, where there is scarcely any vegetation, and where all the drinking water comes from Africa, and to take the Neapolitan steamer for Messina.

As we neared the Sicilian coast, we saw Etna in eruption. We stayed long enough in Syracuse to see the ruins of the Roman amphitheatre, the gallery called the "ear of Dionysius," the subterranean baths, and the theatre. The next morning at ten we reached Messina, the loveliness of which I will not attempt to describe. Another boat took us to Naples, and had any view succeeded the Bay of Naples as it did Messina, I think my delight would have driven me crazy. Fortunately my recollections of the Golden Horn sufficed to calm me. I knew characteristics of the bay from pictures in my father's possession, painted by the brothers Hackert, court painters in Naples; so that I somewhat knew the place. Furthermore, the impression of New York Bay was ineffaceably stamped on my memory, although it must yield the palm to Naples, for it lacks the haughty head of Vesuvius towering on high; it lacks the countless monuments of twenty centuries of old civilization and the gorgeous palaces of the new; but then it shows a spectacle that the indolent Neapolitan can scarce imagine; that wondrous active life where every intelligence

speaks ; that magnificent shipping, that mingling of the two vast rivers, the fresh and blooming vegetation on the shores. I went to private lodgings at the foot of the Castel del Ovo, where I had a view of the Bay, Vesuvius. But here where I had hoped to find that world-renowned sunshine, the cloudless moonlit nights, and the light Mediterranean airs, the equinoctial storm came on, and tossed the American fleet then cruising in the bay, sent cold rough winds to destroy the genial atmosphere, clouded the azure sky, and poured down chilly rains. Even Vesuvius would not break out for me. In vain my servant told me that an eruption must take place, for the hermit and all other weather prophets had foretold it ; the mountain fires lay still. On the 3d, a fine clear day, I went to Capri, reaching it too late to see the grotto, and the next two days the storm renewed its violence, and made the visit impossible. In spite of this I visited the whole island, and on the evening of the third day gave a ball at the inn, that I might see the Tarantella danced in this, its native land. For two *scudi* my landlord promised to provide a dozen pretty peasants and the requisite cavaliers, with pipers, wine, fruit, bread and cheese, and my ball went finely off. I then gave up the grotto and went to Sorrento, and thence by Castelamare and Portici back to Naples. Busy as I was with the present, I found time for a glance at the past. I had seen in the yellow fever year, 1822, a mighty city, (New York,) rendered desolate ; its houses forsaken and its commerce stayed. I had gone down into the city to look at it. The watchman at the Park looked at me in amazement, as did those in Broadway, Wall, and Pearl-streets, who usually sat upon chairs in the middle of the streets smoking cigars. I soon got enough of my lonely walk. My walk in Pompeii was different. Fifteen centuries had gone since this city had been inhabited, and there were no ties to the present. That ancient civilization suggested other ideas and bore another look than that of modern days. Comparison between these civilizations is natural and interesting, but not very instructive, and the only result is, that now man gives to practical industry the energy that then was consecrated to art. Pompeii must be leisurely seen, and will reward the antiquarian. Most of its treasures are in

the Museo Borbonico. The collection is already immense, and new buildings must be prepared if the disinterments go on as fast as they did in the days of Queen Caroline (Murat).

I felt a different interest in the hotel, from the window of which poor *Nourrit*, once the first Parisian opera singer, had thrown himself in despair, when Duprez was preferred to him. "I was king," he wrote; "I governed the opera at my will—there I reigned; now I will never govern more." Thus applying Thiers' words about Louis Philippe to himself. He could not bear to see his rival preferred. Whoever has seen *Nourrit* in the first act of Auber's *Gustave ou le Bal Masque*, will remember with what a solemn gravity and feeling of superiority he used to strut about and strive to imitate the majesty of kings. Poor fellow he was deposed by Duprez, *ut de poitrine*, which he could never reach.

I left Naples without having seen its sky, and the next day I started by Civita Vecchia for Leghorn. The elder Mr. Grant was nearly blind and deaf, and quite retired from business; Mr. John Grant had gone to the baths, so I went to Trieste. The Hamburg Consul there, Mr. Joseph Prey, informed me that the very respectable house of J. C. Ritter and Co. wanted my help in their German, French, and English correspondences. The duty was an easy one for me, if we should mutually please each other. I was invited for Sunday to the house of Mr. Boeckman, the head of the firm. On Saturday Mr. Meticke pointed him out to me on the exchange, and I saw a person who never stood still for a moment, holding a cane in his hands crossed behind his back. He moved as if he were full of quicksilver, and I could not get a sight of his profile. I found him on Sunday however, friendly and polite, and soon came to an understanding with him. I found also "good nature" to be the characteristic of the whole firm. I remained in charge of the correspondence of this firm for two years, and quitted it because of difference of character and mercantile views. All commentaries on our separation were prevented by the Messrs. Ritter giving me an entire year's salary, and by the continuation of our friendly intercourse.

I had now time to look about me, at the manners and customs of the mixed population of Trieste, which consists principally of



Italians and Germans, plenty of Greeks, and a few English and French. The natives are Slavie in origin, and the sailors and fishermen from Dalmatia.

Trieste is both the only free German port in the south and an Austrian city. As free port, it belongs to Germany; in everything else it is part of the Austrian Empire; and the hearts of the people beat only for Germany when it accords with Austria. This was clearly shown in the Frankfort National Assembly of 1848, in the choice of the Trieste deputies, who were Herr Von Bruck and Dr. F. M. Burger, now Governor of Steinmark. Still I must say that the population of Trieste is mercantile, and when I speak of their heart-beatings, I must add, that the hearts are situated in their pockets. But in all commercial places—Trieste, or Hamburg, or Bremen, or anywhere else—commercial interest is the first principle, and patriotism merely secondary. Thus the tendencies of public officers and merchants are different. Once, when Count Stadion, Governor of Trieste, and myself differed about some measure, he frankly—for he was a noble, open-hearted man—remarked, that it was impossible to please everybody. Where the interest of the city was so much in question, as in the case referred to, I thought there could be no difficulty. The Count replied: “Yes, but I look to Vienna, not Trieste; they must be pleased there; the rest follows naturally, or *must* follow.” The reconciliation of these two interests is the greatest task of a governor of Trieste, if he wishes the welfare of the city, as Count Stadion unquestionably did. But his cleverness, sometimes over-praised, was not equal to all emergencies. He sometimes showed weakness, especially in political matters. “It is my custom,” he said to me, “to stand behind the curtain, and hold the thread in my own hands, and let others do what is to be done.” He, being legally bred, was somewhat pedantic. I never saw him smile; and even the smoking, which he permitted after his dinner-parties, never brought an expression of ease, much less of merriment, to his face. The man was cold as the statue of the Commander in Don Juan; and the politeness of the entertainer and the respect of the entertained were equally cold. He was esteemed, like many others, because talent, which he did not possess

was attributed to him; and for the same reason, he was made minister.

Leaving the Messrs. Ritter, I of course had to look for other employment. The secretaryship of the Austrian "Lloyds" was vacant, having been resigned by Mr. J. Hagenauer, and I went directly to M. von Bruck, who was the most influential man in the affair. He came and gave no positive answer, but promised me all his interest. I passed the time in paying a visit to my brother at Florence, and then returned to Trieste, where I found that the post had been given to a person who not only had faithfully served "Lloyds" in the Levant, but had also private influence. An article, the last of a series written for amusement, on the characteristics of the port of Fiume, and its advantages as a to-be rival of Trieste, made a great noise in the city, and even procured me a request from the Governor to answer it. I did so, to prove to him that I could write German quite as well as French or English. This answer, which was intended for the Journal of "Lloyds," pleased the people of Trieste so much, that they had it inserted in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*.

His Excellency observing that I could write German, requested me to write an article for "Lloyds" Journal on the Vienna and Trieste railway, comparing the two routes from Laybach through the Karst and the other along the Isonzo. The governor preferred the first, but the most important men of Trieste, among them Herr von Bruck, disagreed with him. I wrote the article, and gave it to him. It was written rather polemical, and touched upon one or two foreign topics. The governor read it at table to Messrs. Gio di P. Sartorio, C. Regensdorff, of the firm of Reyers, and another gentleman whose name I have forgotten. His excellency read so badly that the article was condemned, and Mr. Regensdorff requested to furnish a better one as soon as possible. The printers already had a copy of mine, and I was promised a proof on the third day. But the next day I heard that Mr. Regensdorff's was to be printed first. I complained, but Mr. Papsch, the foreman, had received his orders from his excellency in person. I took my article back, and had it published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* two days before Mr. Regensdorff's appeared in Trieste.

It provoked a reply in the *Augsburger Zeitung*, an honor not conferred upon my worthy rival. I would not have spoken of this, except to give an instance of the frequent double-dealing and unworthiness of Count Stadion.

My friends then advised me to write something that would prove to the governor my commercial cleverness, and I published with Faverge my "Glance at the position of Commerce at the close of the year 1843, with especial reference to Trieste and the future of Austrian Commerce." Count Stadion was pleased with the pamphlet. I obtained first the *imprimatur* of the censor of the press in Vienna, and then asked for the count's permission to print, which he gave on condition of my altering one paragraph of twenty-eight words. I expressed the same idea in twenty eight other words, and his excellency was satisfied.

The governor had no further doubts of my capability, but he objected to my age. "In Austria," he said, "we prefer only men who have served thirty years under our eyes." And I already counted sixty-five! The affairs of the Exchange, and its correspondence with government, were usually written in Italian, and the secretary was generally an old man. These writings were suffered to accumulate in Vienna, simply because they were not written in German, and the Council there did not always know Italian. It had long appeared necessary to conduct the correspondence in German, and it was proposed to give the Italian secretary a German assistant. Dr. F. M. Burger, then actuary of the Exchange, whose confidence I had won, did all he could for me; the rest of the authorities were in my favor; but the Italian secretary and the governor were against me. The governor had nothing to say against me, but he knew that I understood him, and that I doubted his infallibility. Therefore if I were appointed by the Board, I must expect his veto.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### TRIESTE.

Visit of the Emperor Ferdinand, in the company of his wife and minister—The Baron Von Küebec—His invitation to persevere in the examination of Peel's Bank Bill, of 1844, which I first bring to his notice—He permits me to dedicate my "*Condition and Prospects of the World's Commerce in the early months of the year 1845*," to him—Count Stadion's great egg, the Austrian East India Company—Mission of Mr. P. Erichsen—The article of the Augsburg "*Algemeine Zeitung*," of August 9th, 1845, in relation to the population of Trieste, &c.—A reference to Mr. Von Bruck, the true lucky star that has risen over Trieste—Closer acquaintanceship with him—The blind traveller, Lieutenant Holman—The Scotchman, Keith, with his collection of daguerreotypes—Completion of a work on freedom of Trieste as a commercial port—Count Stadion lays his veto upon it—A project touching me, devised by Mr. Von Bruck, takes me to Vienna, and thence to Paris.

THIS was the condition of affairs early in 1844, when Baron Von Gehringer, private secretary of Baron Von Küebec, came to Trieste, on his way from Constantinople. I had written to him in Vienna, about my just-mentioned pamphlet, and had thanked him for procuring its appearance, when I met him in Venice. He had also read something of mine on the corn trade, and he now told me that the Emperor and his cabinet would visit Trieste in the autumn, and that Baron Von Küebec who had read some writings of mine, had expressed a wish to know me. The Emperor came accompanied by Prince Metternich, Count Kollowrath, Baron Von Küebec, and other notable persons. I called on the Baron, and was requested to call the next day at 2 o'clock. I had hardly reached there, when Count Stadion entered, and saw me with surprise. After waiting a quarter of an hour, I was received, and found him a polite and clever man. The topics of the day were

discussed, and then I expressed my desire for the post as assistant Secretary of the Exchange. He promised to speak to Count Stadion about it, and I know he did so, though in vain. He asked what I was doing now, and I told him that I was examining Sir Robert Peel's Bank Bill, with reference to the renewal of the Act of Incorporation of the Bank of England, in order to see its influence upon the English and the general money market. "If you do that, Mr. Nolte," he said, "you will give me great pleasure. We in Austria are rather behindhand in such matters, and require help." "Eccellenza," I replied, "that is sufficient to set me at work, but I cannot pass through the hands of Count Stadion, whose grasp is not a friendly one for me." He laughed, and told me to send the work directly to him. Four months afterwards I sent it to Baron Von Gehringer, with a request to give it to M. de Kuebec. This brought me in answer the minister's approval, and a request to publish.

On the 4th of May, 1845, Count Stadion sent the following rescript:—

"WELL-BORN LORD:

"The inclosed MSS., entitled "Examination of the new reform in the English bank and money-market, with their influence on commerce, and its effect upon prices," which your excellency has sent to the President of the Royal Imperial Court, I send back, with this remark, that his excellency the president has read it, with all the interest that its great information, clearness, and precision deserve.

"With greatest esteem, etc.

"STADION."

I recognized the hand of Baron Von Kuebec in this, and determined to dedicate the work to him. I therefore wrote to him, and received the answer on the 27th May, containing his acceptance of the dedication, and his thanks for the compliment.

When I asked permission to print it, of Count Stadion, he replied, "Certainly not." But when I remarked that it was to be dedicated, by permission, to Baron Von Kuebec, he said "So." Then I recognized that position, not merit, was what he looked at

in a man. It was not very difficult to see the reason of the importance of Trieste, since it is the exit point of all German and Austrian industry by the Mediterranean sea to all regions, and is the first point of junction between the Levant and the North. Count Stadion did not understand the future importance of Trieste. He felt it as any half-observing person with cosmopolitan ideas would feel it; but the manner of increasing its importance was utterly hidden from him. The overland voyage of Mr. P. Erichsen, now Secretary of the Vienna and Danube Steamship Company, to India and China, with a view of promoting an East India trade with Trieste, was, of course, in these days of free-trade, useless. The Vienna bankers cared little for these extended operations, and would take no shares in the proposed association, not seeing the source from which profit was to flow; the treasury was not rich enough to support this monopoly, and there was not sufficient surplus capital in Trieste. The true means of bringing Levant commerce to Austria would be the improvement of the postal-system, the roads, and communications generally. Then a company could be found without aid, as indeed took place later. This East India project is the most important that ever got into Count Stadion's head. He had no vitality, however, and soon disappeared. The reader will get a glance of the present and proper leader of Trieste from the following article, published in the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 9, 1845.

“POPULATION OF TRIESTE AND ITS DUTY IN THE FUTURE.

“In this age of universal progress, when the strength of every intellect, high or low, is needed, the idea of coming perfection wars with the love of custom. The more we believe that standing still is retrogression, so much the greater must the union of thought and power appear, without which there can be no progress nor result. Where this union does not exist men should never rest. No enchanter's wand can create it; no law call it into life; it is the result of long vigilance. The necessity which every one feels to contribute his mite towards the common perfection creates the duty of ceasing to be mere spectators of the conflict, and of becoming active participants in it. With such ideas and



with opened eyes it is easy to see by the constitution and organization of our city, by the nature of its manners and customs, what is necessary to produce that common spirit which alone can secure for Trieste the attainment of her object. Thinkers and nonthinkers love her ; but inactive love is useless.

“Trieste is the only Mediterranean seaport in which all this can be clearly shown. Genoa and Leghorn are not representatives of a mighty empire ; the gate to vast provinces. And yet, though this is undeniable, the voice that should urge the improvement of our civil, moral and physical condition is silent—the promise of the future is not whispered. And why this apathy that clogs and retards progress ? The cause is in our origin, in the mixture of our population, in the variety of private interests among which public interests are lost ; in the want of energy, in the fetters of custom. Our government is paternal, but its wisdom has not yet discovered the means of improvement. There are few examples of active help, and many of the slumberers complain about the evil condition of things. There is here no intention of denying the willingness of our fellow-citizens—most of them do not know their wills, nor discover what they have to do or to let alone, what is their duty towards their government, their fellow-citizens and themselves. They lack union, which alone can lead to improvement. As before said, the history of our position explains this.

“At the fall of the French Empire this port first perceived its future ; comparison of Trieste now with Trieste in 1814 will prove the march of progress. Its port-freedom and its position with reference to the East showed the source of its coming rise. But other countries discovered this before the Fatherland, which was just recovering from the long war, and in which commerce was yet in its infancy. Glance at our Exchange. It counts fifty-four great enregistered firms, of which only fifteen are established since 1814–15, and of which only seven are from the German part of the Empire. At the head of these, however, stand Messrs. Reyer & Schlik, a firm ever ready to do all for the common good, and already the pointer out of the road to progress, for instance, by the founding of the Austrian Lloyds. Not profit, but the

common weal, has been their object. But our population consists of Bavarians, Swabians, Rhinelanders, Saxons, of Swiss, of French and English, of Romans, of Neapolitans and Greeks, all whom have the protection of the government, and find here a common home. Gain was the motive of their settling here, the weightiest, the first motive; and that love for the Austrian Empire was only a slowly ripened feeling. Of course, you find here much egotistic indifference and apathy. Therefore we miss that feeling of their own political worth in the grown-up generation born here, of those foreign settlers, which should have raised them to high rank and influence. The more the government shows a tendency to progress, the more it becomes the duty of individuals to give their influence and power to help that progress on—to love the old only when it contains the seed of advance, and not to hate blindly whatsoever is new, but to prove it, and if it be found good, to accept it. Unfortunately this is just the spirit that we lack.

“The fear that the new will not prove so good as it appears; a disposition to suspect it as a result of private interests, the excellence of which is doubted because unknown or because it comes from a disapproved source—this is the reigning disposition here and prevents the spread of true philanthropy and patriotism. Among those who have ever honorably striven for the independence which every well organized man desires, there is one who has never stood still, who has seen the mighty future of Trieste and urged the city on towards it, whose works are visible to every eye that looks from the heights of Opschina upon the steamers, or lands from one of them here. He is to be found by the stranger at early morning, noon or evening, in the Halls of the Tergesteum or before the Chancery of Lloyds. He is a man of the greatest simplicity of manners, with the forehead of the weariless thinker. Every one listens to him with attention, every one gets a kind, intelligent answer from him. This man, whose sharpness in detecting merit in others is only equalled by his modesty in doubting his own, was born on the Rhine, and has won the veneration of Trieste by introducing steamers and founding the Austrian Lloyds. But he was not always rightly judged nor properly

esteemed; nor was his zeal for public good unsuspected to be zeal for his own interest—nor were his clear insight into the future, his clearness of method and judicious selection of means always appreciated. Yet in his noble example men should have heard a voice saying, ‘Go thou and do likewise.’

“Many Germans have discovered new helps to trade and industry in Trieste, opened new ways, and helped the spread and perfectioning of our commerce; for instance, in opening trade with Hungary. Private interest, people say—and the glorious example stands alone: but the impulse is given, and the next generation will profit by it, and work for the public good. Fortunately Trieste possesses in her governor an earnest man, who, if he do not always find the way of doing a thing, still has the good of the city at heart, sees the greatness of her future, and desires to promote it as now, by the establishment of an East India Co. This proposition has not yet been received by the Vienna bankers with the warmth that it merits, but that will come in time. For men cannot long remain blind to the exhaustless treasury of Indian and Chinese commerce, of the countless purchasers that those wares will bring to Trieste, who will find new necessities and new tastes. But the foundation must be laid, and patience must be exercised and means furnished, before this splendid project can go on. One day Trieste will understand this.”

The man of whom I have spoken above is Freiherr Von Bruck. The morning after the arrival of this article in Trieste, I was surrounded by anxious people, inquiring if I had read it. When I said “Yes,” they asked “How could you write it?” “But, how do you know I wrote it?” “There is no one else here who could have done it.” “Well,” I said, “I did write it; and what then? What have you to blame in it? Is it not all true?” “Yes; but we cannot bear that a stranger should receive such extraordinary praise.” “Well,” I said, “you can prevent the recurrence of this by doing as he has done.” Another highly estimable and worthy friend of mine said, “Mr. Nolte, I am sorry that you wrote that article, for I have liked your other writings much.” I asked his reasons; but he would only say, “The article does not



please me." The cause, however, was plain: they were unwilling to give the position to Herr Von Bruck, which his undeniable worth deserved from this his second fatherland. Yet my friend abovementioned, became, a few years later, one of the most devoted followers of Von Bruck.

A word here of my connection with the Freiherr. I had only known him by sight before my application for the secretaryship of Lloyds; and the character given to me of him, on my first arrival, was that of a clever but crotchety man. "He tries everything," they said—"starts a hundred schemes, gets sharers, and when a scheme threatens badly, backs out of it, and leaves the others to bear the loss." But it was impossible to pass a few weeks in Trieste, without seeing his footsteps in every direction, without recognizing his systematic and well-ordered mind, and seeing in him an extraordinary and thoughtful man—no dreamer—but a clear-sighted, practical man. This belief grew with my knowledge of him, and was proven at my return from Florence. He had a daughter there at a seminary for noble young ladies, and had requested me to visit her and bring him letters. This began a more intimate acquaintance, which increased in the summer, by our frequently dining together on Sundays, at the Hotel Metternich. I gratefully remember his good-will towards me.

Shortly after the Emperor's visit, the people of Trieste became intensely anxious about the continuation of their harbor freedom. In the Vienna and Pesth journals, constant attempts were made to close the port, because of the lack of funds in the Austrian custom-house. These articles were known to be from the pen of Ministerial Councillor Von Hock, who had long been controller in Trieste, and who probably expressed the views of the Cabinet. Trieste was disturbed, and the exchange deputation requested me to write a work on free ports in general, and Trieste in particular, in order to distribute it among the high placemen at Vienna, particularly the court councillors, and to get their influence. I undertook the work, finished it in about six months, and laid it before the committee, among whom were Herr Constantin Von Reyher, Herr Von Renner, and other principal men, and they determined to print it, and to have it also translated by me into

French. But Governor Stadion's approval must be had, and he greatly liked the work on the whole, but disliked certain occasional free-thinking tendencies, and thought that the public was not ready to receive it. The committee, like all the public bodies in Trieste, had to bow to the nod of his excellency. I had been paid a good price for the work, and owned the manuscript and copyright. But the governor wanted the committee to buy the copyright, with which I was very ill content.

In the summer of 1844, many strangers had come to Trieste in expectation of a visit from the court, and also for sea bathing. One of these could enjoy but little of the festivities, for he was blind. He had, by his eccentricity and wandering through the world, won a certain celebrity, but had no merit as an intelligent person. He was an English naval lieutenant, by name, James Holman, who had lost his sight by the sudden change from a three years' cruise off the coast of Labrador to the West India station. He was thus obliged to quit the service, at the age of 28, and to retire on lieutenant's half pay. But William IV., himself a sailor, made him a knight of Windsor, which entitled him to a house in Windsor Park, and this house he rented for some £80 or £100. He lived for some years in the country with his brother, a married but childless preacher. But the difference of circumstances and dispositions made the time pass heavily, and Holman determined to wander about the world. Though he had means enough to employ a good servant, he determined to travel alone, and depend upon the help of his chance companions, in hopes thus to secure more admiration and sympathy. This resolve was the more remarkable from the fact that he spoke only English. Thus, for twenty-seven years, he wandered about through Norway and Sweden, Russia to Siberia, Poland, Hungary, Turkey, Asia Minor, Egypt, and the Mediterranean African coast, Italy, Spain, France, and part of South America. The only difficulty that he met was in Cracow, Poland, where, in spite of his blindness, he was seized as a spy, thrown for nine months into prison, and only released by an English lady of rank, who heard of him while at her hotel in Cracow. He had published eight 8vo. vols. of his travels, but being all hearsay they were worth-

less; as when he describes the city of Nizza as very small, because, being invited to take a walk, his guide brought him back in half an hour.

He came to Trieste from Greece, and was brought to the Hotel Metternich by a waiter, hoping to find there some one who could speak English. One day, the host came to me and told me that a blind Englishman desired to sit where he could hear his mother tongue, and asked if he might come to my table. I said yes, and he brought Lieutenant Holman forward. He was a good looking man of sixty, with a long, white, silken beard, which he arranged with a pocket-comb every fifteen minutes. I knew him for twenty days, but never heard him utter a thoughtful phrase. He was a dry narrator, and a most vain man. I asked him one day to let me sketch him, as he was a very patriarchal-looking person. I surprised him when half dressed the next morning, and begged him to sit still; but he would not until he had made a careful toilette, when he said, "I've done, if you think I am looking well enough." I finished my sketch in twenty minutes, and, after many copies had been asked for, had it lithographed. I wrote the following lines under it:—

Though Providence's stern decree  
Forever closed thy mortal eye,  
Her own is watchful over thee,  
And her protection ever nigh.

Thy ways are safe! The torrid zone,  
Siberia's snows and barrenness,  
All climes where'er thou stepst alone,  
To thee are harm—and dangerless.

Then travel on until that bourne,  
Where thou wilt reach thy journey's end;  
Where all thy vision will return,  
And Heaven's light on thee descend.

These verses gave extraordinary delight to all the English in Trieste, and the English preacher there paid rather a doubtful compliment, by saying, "I did not give you credit for so much religious sense." I met him once more, seven years later, but only to see him pass by me with rapid step.



Another odd acquaintance, who also sought for English intercourse in the Hotel Metternich, was a Scotchman named Keith. He had travelled through Asia Minor, discovered some ancient cities and mines, and published his travels. His predecessor Fellowes, and other travellers, doubted the existence of these mines, since they had not themselves been able to find them. Therefore Keith resolved on another voyage, in which he determined to daguerreotype the scenes. He was now returning to England with full and incontestible proofs of his truthfulness; and he gloried in his anticipated victory.

After completing my work on free ports, I published the second volume of "View of the Commercial World in 1846," and closed my literary career in Trieste by a humorous article on the Dalmatian coast, which by Freiherr Von Bruck's desire I published in the *Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung* in 1846. It attracted attention to the Lloyds' steamers. It contained a sketch of a good natured wine-traveller, who when he read it exclaimed, "Only that confounded Nolte could have sketched me so well."

The bread won by literature in Trieste was very uncertain. The few readers in Trieste had no particular taste for statistics or national economy. To have attended industriously to anything else would soon have used up what means I possessed. Mr. Von Bruck now spoke to me of an agency in London for Austrian commerce. It was in the hands of Baron Rothschild, a man who cared only for title, and who wanted to establish a general consulate office in London. He had expressed these desires in Vienna, and had designated me as a proper person for Vice Consul. A correspondence with Mr. Moritz Goldschmidt, partner and agent of the Rothschilds in Vienna, would settle the matter. I felt sure of Baron Von Küebec's help, and on him the nomination depended. So in my sixty-seventh year I left Trieste for the capital.

Here I first called upon Mr. Goldschmidt, where I was well received, but learned that all depended upon Herr Von Küebec. I at once called upon him, and received a request to wait upon him the day after, at 2 o'clock. When I saw him he received me as an old acquaintance, told me of the condition of the London

consulate, as well as of that in Paris, and said that a vice consulate was to be formed in each city. That four candidates would be named and presented to him. He then requested me to arrange the matter with the Rothschilds, get my name inscribed, and "when they are presented," said he, "I will choose yours."

When I told this to Mr. Goldschmidt, he said that the salary was now reckoned at £600; but he would know better after seeing Mr. Solomon Rothschild at Paris. He would give me a letter to Baron James, who would introduce me to his father-in-law, Solomon. After eight days' delay I started for Stuttgart, via Ischl, Munich, and Augsburg. Dr. Gustav Kolb, editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, was my companion part of the way, and accompanied me to visit Mr. Cotta in Stuttgart. I agreed to become the regular correspondent of these gentlemen from Paris, where they had ten correspondents, among others, Mr. Mohl,—this arrangement being made in case I should miss the London appointment; for I had begun to distrust my fate, and to tolerate misfortune. But a good price was offered me for financial letters, and I left Stuttgart and went by Manheim, Frankfort, Cologne, and Brussels to Paris, where I saw my family after a six years' absence. My two daughters had been well educated, and were now pleasant and amiable girls with robust health, such as their poor mother had not had for a long while. I soon saw that there was no hope of the London position, by the politely managed delay of the Rothschilds, and at last a letter from Moritz Goldschmidt informed me that I had better waste no more time with the Rothschilds, as they had requested that some imperial civil officer might be appointed, and that it was therefore beyond Baron Von K<sup>u</sup>ebec's power to appoint me.

Such are diplomatic promises, but Solomon Rothschild told me that my name headed the list of candidates presented to Herr Von K<sup>u</sup>ebec. By this time I saw that it had been settled to give the post to a civil officer, if one could be found, before anything had been said to me. But he was not found, and the post was vacant for five years, until Von Bruck's successor, Herr Von Baumgarten, gave it to Mr. Schwartz, the Austrian secretary of the London Crystal Palace, a very worthy man. Most of the

Austrian consuls-general in the Levant are very clever men, as, for instance, Mr. de Laurie in Bucharest, Dr. Göde in Bayreuth, and Mr. Huber in Alexandria. All these were Austrian civil officers, and therefore did not possess the necessary general knowledge of the commercial world. In England too, a consul particularly needs a knowledge of the language, a very rare accomplishment in an Austrian of rank ; for I once heard Count Stadion, at a dinner given to the engineer, Lieut. Waghorn, propose his health, and make a speech in English which nobody could understand. This the more astonished me from the fact, that the count had been in England and admired it.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

### PARIS, HAMBURGH—VAIN HOPE IN PARIS.

Remarks upon the condition of public affairs there in the years 1847 and 1848—

False policy of Louis Philippe—Guizot—Negotiations with the publishing house of Messrs. Perthes, Besser, and Mauke in Hamburgh, in relation to a revision of William Benecke's work on the "System of Insurance and Bottomry"

—Another visit to Hamburgh in 1848—The February Revolution at Paris

—Its consequences in Germany—Feverish state of things at Hamburgh—

The Hamburgh free-trade paper called the "Deutscher Freihafen"—After the withdrawal of its first leading editor, the management of the concern falls into my hands—The sheet christened the "Deutsche Handels Zeitung" (German Commercial Journal) in the beginning of 1849—Dictatorial

conduct of the directing committee of shareholders—Exhaustion of the small capital set apart for the support of free-trade principles—The paper dies—

The committee set their faces against all explanation of the causes of the paper's decease, and step in violently—My farewell words to the readers at the close of the paper are despotically suppressed and taken out of the compositor's hands—

The revision of W. Benecke's work on "Insurance," and the completion of it in the month of April, 1852.

I EXPECTED to better my circumstances in Paris by writing, but was disappointed, and so half of 1847 passed away. I had hitherto visited my family in Paris but seldom, and had no opportunity of hearing popular ideas nor public sentiment. But now, after a residence of some months, I began to understand more than appeared in the journals. I had passed the first five years of Louis Philippe's reign in Paris, and the other ten abroad, so that the change of public sentiment came suddenly before me. Louis Philippe owed his crown to a mercantile combination, under the direction of Lafayette; and that he pleased the *bourgeois* well enough, and the nation had taken him as they would anybody else,

yet he had no hold upon the national affection. He based himself only on his goodness as a father, and the remarkable virtues of his family. But he soon showed that he had no interest at heart but the private interests of his family. The costly festivities in Paris, and the search for kingly alliances, proved his present views, and the hidden conflict between the *bourgeoisie* and his monarchical principles must soon leak out. As the princes became popular, they lost favor with him. His ideal was Louis XIV.; and he gave as his reason for this, that the less indubitable the authority, the easier it would be to rule the people. The venality of Teste, his minister, and the therewith connected plans of Cubieres and others, were well known to him; and when Teste was exposed by his colleagues, Louis Philippe made him seal-bearer and grand cross of the legion of honor. Any person in Paris could see how slight was the tie between ruler and people. To this was added Guizot's unpopularity. This man so praised abroad, so hated at home, with indubitable first-rate talent, never could win public confidence nor remove suspicion; and yet believed that a minister must be useful in proportion to his lack of popularity. In such a state of affairs, intrigues were, of course, successful. The letters found in the king's portfolio from De Joinville and D'Aumale, prove that they understood the state of things, and had vainly endeavored to change his measures with reference to the banquets and other assemblages. Many a time have I said to friends, that if the king allowed his ministers to have their way, he was playing with his crown. The people knew that he had lost, in 1847, his best counsellor, his sister, the Princess Adelaide, and had now no guide but that false one Guizot.

Letters from Messrs. Perthes, Besser, & Mauke called me back to Hamburgh in February of the next year. These gentlemen had long wanted to publish a new edition of William Benecke's "System of Assurance and Bottomry," which should show the progress of this system during the last forty years, and its present position. They asked me to point out the best man in Trieste for this. Now the best men in Trieste for this were Italians, and could not write German. I told them so, and recommended them to ask Mr. C. Regensdorff, the well instructed business man of

Messrs. Reyer & Schlik. His answer was that since I had left Trieste, there was no one left worth mentioning. Therefore commenced the correspondence which took me to Hamburgh.

The changes that had followed the great conflagration made me a stranger to everything but the basin of the Alster. My last visit had been in 1830, and I found a new exchange, but in it no faces of my youthful friends, but plenty of antiquated behind-the-age people. As I never liked these in my youth, I cared not for their acquaintance now. Forty-five years were between those days and these, and I expected to see some trace of progress in those faces; but no! I can write it as truth, they are to-day what they ever were.

As a proof of what I could do, I wrote a treatise on Bottomry, quite departing from Benecke's ideas, and simplifying the matter. This work greatly pleased one high exchange authority, and displeased another less instructed; but I succeeded at last in explaining matters to him, and then began my task.

Scarcely had I commenced when the news of the French Revolution, of February 24th, reached Hamburgh, during exchange hours, on the 27th. It was unexpected all over Europe; but it fell like a thunderbolt on Hamburgh. Later news threw some light on the matter, but people were watching the shaking of the first throne in Germany. When the Berlin revolution of March took place, and was followed by that of Vienna, the faces of the Hamburghers waxed very sad, and every man of property looked about sadly, to see how he might preserve it. When Cæsar and king knew no longer wherein their safety lay; when one fled from his throne and capital, and another, as they say, lurked for days in his chamber, how could the Hamburgh Senate, like the walls of Jericho, not fall at the first trumpet blast, and make promises that they never could keep. The so-called leaders of the people from Würtemberg, Hungary, the Rhine, and other parts of Germany, came to Hamburgh, and required the Senate to promise what they called an amelioration of the condition of the people. Constitutionality was talked about, the red flag hoisted, and Hamburgh greatly frightened. At this time, a journal belonging to the free-trade class, and called "German Free Ports," which had been



founded six months before, was deserted by its editor, Dr. Scherer, and his place was offered to me. I took it the more readily that my employers in the "Assurance" work were too much occupied with politics to go on with it.

I was to have been presented to my collaborateurs on Monday, May 22, but this was put off. The close of the week approached, and as the paper must appear on Saturday, I started with directions or instructions, and got out the No. for May 28th, alone.

Eleven more numbers appeared under my editorship. The first stone of stumbling was the news of Radetzky's victory at Custozza, of the probable effect of which on Italy's political independence I spoke in the number for August 13. I uttered sentiments natural to one who was born an Italian, and who had adopted the United States, and learned there the love of unchecked liberty. But Hamburgers could only see that a German army had conquered an Italian one, and over this they rejoiced. As I defended my position, it produced a noise. There were in Hamburg plenty of zealots for Prussia and its king. I was accused of positive untruthfulness in many of my statements, particularly the cruelties of General Wrangel, and I was reduced to dismiss my Berlin correspondent. But I could not get another without going to Berlin, and therefore I went. There I found that all that he had written about Wrangel was very positively true, and that that general had forcibly entered and searched the houses of merchants Heil in the Leipzig street, Krebs in the Jerusalem street, Burgher Otto at the ship-yards, Counsellor of Justice Lindau, and Mr. Hildendagen under the Lindens, and that he had destroyed the machinery in the printery of Mr. Krause. I knew many friends of free trade in Berlin, but none would now take the correspondentship, and I had nothing left but to thank the former correspondent, T. M., for what he had done. When I came back, I simply said that I had engaged a good correspondent, and when the *new* letters appeared people were delighted with them. A year later, I informed them that the new correspondent was the original T. M.

The idea of a Red Republic filled all heads, and men tried to prove its existence. Our Frankfort correspondent was suspected of misrepresenting matters. I told their committee that the cor-

respondent was my predecessor, Dr. Scherer, and that his letters appeared to me to be the best that I had seen. But the committee had other views, and I was required on June 2, 1849, to promise that no further letters should be received from Dr. Scherer; that from the beginning of the third quarter no more political correspondence should appear, and that the Berlin, Frankfort, and other correspondents, should be notified by me to cease; and that instead of correspondence the leading article should be a weekly review of politics and news.

I was astonished at this, that a committee of merchants should thus interfere with an editor's business. But the paper was governed by a committee consisting of the editor and four merchants. The secret of the whole difficulty probably was that I, as citizen of the United States, was a republican, and they knew no difference between the American and the Red Republicans.

Finally, for want of means and subscribers, I laid down my editorial dignity on the 29th September, 1849. I had written a farewell article, which was at the printer's. A member of the committee heard of it, went to the office, and ordered it to be left out. In the last number I read as follows:

"Although to-day's is the last number of the German Commercial Journal, yet the desire of furthering free trade by means of the press is not resigned, and there will shortly appear a weekly paper called the 'Börsenhalle (Exchange) Times,' in which the reader will find all necessary information on the views and principles of the friends of free trade."

This paper, edited by Carl Roback, of Berlin, was found not to pay, and was abandoned after three months' publication.

During my editorship, I was often told to attend to the views of the "Hamburgh Exchange," but never could find out where they were expressed. Every man had his own ideas; and the political ideas of merchants are of but little value, as they result not from a cosmopolitan way of thinking, but simply from the consideration of private interests, and it is very seldom that a merchant's opinions are founded upon the general well being of the mass.

I now returned to my "System of Assurance and Bottomry;"

begun on October 2, 1849, given up until January, 1852, and then finished in three months. I had begun this work in my seventieth year, and finished it in my seventy-third. Its reception by the public has proven its usefulness, and therefore I may be allowed here to repeat the closing words:

"My greatest desire in publishing a work, the difficulties of which no man can comprehend, is to free myself from all illusions about my own force, and to prove that I have not over estimated my capabilities. If it be true, I shall enjoy the pleasing consciousness that my life, so full of action, has left behind it some traces of usefulness."

The close of my life is probably not far off, and in writing the last lines of this volume I would say a word about these sketches from life. For the great mass of readers they will possess but little interest, but for those who have known me, this work may awaken a fresh interest in the past, nor will it be unacceptable to them to walk with me along that varied way which I have travelled for so many years. This I deemed their due and mine, and for it I hope that this work will not be quite overlooked.

VINCENT NOLTE.

HAMBURGH, May, 1853.

THE END.





## APPENDIX.

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THE reader must bear in mind that this work is a translation, and that the free use of personalities is indulged in by a foreigner, and a man who has evidently formed hasty conclusions.

The financial allusions to Edward Livingston and Mr. Davezac are upon matters not thoroughly understood by Mr. Nolte. They belong to the political animosities of the past, and would have been suppressed were it not considered that the duty of a translator is faithfulness to his text.

The allusions to General Scott's appearance in Paris, after the battle of Waterloo (page 249), were no doubt occasioned by ill-feeling for some fancied slight, growing out of the circumstances described below—which has been furnished, from recollection, by a gentleman who was in Paris at the time, and was personally cognizant of what he states.

General Scott, soon after the battle of Waterloo, was in Paris. France, then occupied by more than half a million of hostile troops, did not belong to Frenchmen. Some of the British regiments which had been with General Ross and Admiral Cockburn, at Washington, were now quartered in Paris, and, as a pleasant conceit, got up a dinner in that capital, to celebrate the anniversary of the burning of the national buildings [civil], the archives and library, in the capital of another hemisphere. Hundreds of other British officers, of high rank, were present, as approving guests. This continued want of shame on the part of the Vandals, fired General S. with indignation, and he employed months in arranging a retaliatory celebration. Receiving the hearty support of the American officers, and many other citizens, then in Paris—Mr. Jackson, Charge d'Affaires; Colonels Drayton, M'Ree, Thayer and Archer; his aid-de-camp, Major Mercer, his companion, N. Leathenworth, Esquire, of New York, &c. &c. &c. &c.—General S., passing by the war events in which he himself had participated, fixed upon the 8th of January—the first anniversary of the battle of New Orleans—when some ninety Americans met, to give vent to their feelings. It is possible that Mr. Nolte, as a resident of New Orleans, may have been called upon to subscribe; but if not, he, certainly, being on the spot, learned the whole history of this dinner. General S. presided. The leading or retaliatory toast, was, of course, *General Jackson and his glorious defence of New Orleans!* given by Scott with warmth, and all the circumstances which enhanced the victory and

deepened the shame of the defeated; together with a severe animadversion on the recent celebration of the barbarian acts perpetrated at Washington. Nothing was neglected that could give publicity and *eclat* to the retaliation. The elaborate preparations were mentioned in the highest French, Russian, and German circles, with which Gen. Scott and his American friends were on the most amicable terms. The *Hôtel Robert* was the place selected for meeting, where the allied sovereigns, when in Paris, had habitually dined, and where the *elite* of the British empire were daily to be seen, in January, 1816—(Parliament met a month later)—Lord Hill's head-quarters, with a battalion of household troops, was within half pistol shot; all the American officers were in full costume, &c. &c. &c. &c. General S. drew up a full account of the dinner, which *The Constitutionnel*, though a liberal paper, did not dare to publish (being under censorship) till the name of Sir Edward Pakenham (he being the brother-in-law of the Duke of Wellington) was expunged, as well as the relative numbers engaged at New Orleans—because of the great excess on the British side. Gen. S., however, at the expense of some guineas, caused the full account to be published, as an advertisement, in one of the London journals. Such, no doubt, were the grounds of Mr. Nolte's sneers at the American *major* general (low rank certainly), in a crowd of field marshals, full generals, and lieutenant generals—many of whom, nevertheless, stood towards him as attentive friends.



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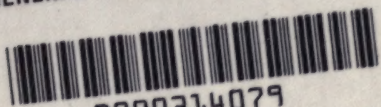
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